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The University of San Francisco

THE SOUND OF INK:
A BAKHTINIAN ANALYSIS OF EXPRESSIVE INTONATION IN WRITTEN FEEDBACK ON ESSAYS OF FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION

A Dissertation Presented
to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

By
Robertson S. Erskine
San Francisco
December 2008

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the member of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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DEDICATION

To my wife, who supported me through this process, and who has endured many hardships in support of my educational endeavors. Forgive me for the time I took from you and our children, and thank you for your faith in me and in us.

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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

> In marking a Composition, an estimate should first be made of its general merits in reference to subject matter, style, and method of treatment. From the mark thus given, a deduction should be made for each mistake noted on the margin. (Hart 1892, p. 347)

In 1892, instructors of composition would have followed similar guidelines for providing written feedback to students, and since then theorists and practitioners of written response investigated numerous additional techniques for improving the written response provided to students on their compositions. In the field of Rhetoric and Composition (L1), one of the most discussed, expected, and yet often-controversial tools used by composition instructors is written feedback on student essays. Straub (1996) insists, "[Response] is how we receive and respond to the words of students put on the page that speaks loudest in our teaching […] carrying the most weight in writing instruction" (p. 246). Numerous studies have been conducted both supporting and refuting the pedagogical value of written instructor comments (Dohrer, 1991; Krapels, 1990; Latham, 1999; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; McGroarty & Zhu, 1997; Ramanathan & Kaplan, 2000; Sperling, 1996; Tchudi, 1997; Wiggins, 1997). Researchers have advocated for writing fewer, more detailed comments (Elbow, 1989; Gray, 2004; Has well, 1983; Reeves, 1997) while other studies have proposed radical new approaches to and theories about written comments (Bardine, 1999; Belanoff, 1991; Elbow, 2000; Ferris, 1995; Ransdell, 1999; Sorenson, Savage, & Hartman, 1993; Spear, 1997).

Studies have examined the effect of marginal comments as opposed to end comments (Danis, 1987; Leki, 1990; Muncie, 2000; Smith, 1997), directive versus facilitative feedback (Ransdell, 1999; Straub, 1996), summative versus formative feedback (Brannan & Knoblauch, 1982), tape recorded comments versus written comments (Anson, 1997, 1999; Clark, 1981; Farnsworth, 1974; Johanson, 1999; Mellen & Sommers, 2003; Yarbro & Angevine, 1982), and commenting on content (organization) before commenting on issues of form (grammar, punctuation) (Atwell, 1998; Hairston, 1986; Moxley, 1989; Weaver, 1996), and commenting on drafts either with and without a grade (Elbow, 1998; Ketter & Hunter, 1997; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 1996).

In addition to researchers and practitioners focusing on the location, style, and timing of the comments, researchers in Second Language Acquisition (L2) have simultaneously been investigating and developing practices based on L2 pedagogical research (Ferris, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003; Ferris & Hedgecock, 1998; Raimes, 1985; Spack, 1988; Zamel, 1994). While many of these studies use the same research techniques modeled in L1 studies, the results have often reinforced some L1 studies' findings and contradicted others (Fathman &Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1997; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997; Zhang, 1995). As a result, many researchers in L2 have argued for more research into commenting practices that stem directly from L2 methodology (Ferris, 2003; Silva, 1990; Silva & Brice, 2004). While there are many different theories about the placement, timing, and style of comments, the underlying purpose of writing comments has remained constant in both L1 and L2 research: to provide a student with feedback detailing how well s/he communicated his or her intended meaning, to help a

student see how an audience reacts to his or her writing, and most importantly, to motivate a student to work on revision, improving a student's writing skills (Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1995; Ferris, 2003).

Given that the pedagogical (more precisely the andragogical) goal is to provide comments that will instruct and/or guide the student to improve his or her writing and better understand the writing process, it is only logical that educators in both L1 and L2 fields are continuously searching for new techniques to better support the increasingly diverse student body in their classes. Researchers have studied different theories and methodologies about what type (command, suggestion, correction, and question) of comment works best (Anson, 1989; Ashwell, 2000; Bardine, 1999; Bardine, Bardine & Deegan, 2000; Straub & Lunsford, 1995). While researchers have compiled an impressive catalogue of theories and techniques for providing written feedback, the generalizability of the methods have not always been reliable. The process of writing the comment, where it is written, how it is written, when in the writing process it is written, and the medium in which it is communicated are primarily stylistic issues comprising only a part of the written response genre. The student’s comprehension and use of the comment is the second and equally essential aspect to an effective commenting style (Brannan & Knoblauch, 1982; Brice, 1995; McGee, 1999; Sommers, 1982).

Investigating student interpretation of the comment has opened a new realm of complexity to the study of written comments. In many instances, a written comment may not even be considered for revision purposes by the student because the course is not structured in a way that encourages or even allows revisions to be submitted—the singular comment or all comments on the essay as a whole are definitive, closed,

statements. As a result, many students, and unfortunately some instructors, as well view the comment as little more than a justification of the grade (Ketter & Hunter, 1997; Smith, 1997; Sommers, 1982). If the student is given an opportunity to revise the essay, and then reads, understands, correctly uses, and retains the information communicated through the comment to correct his or her essay, then many educators assume that the comment was effective.

However, does this responsive act demonstrate comprehension? What if a student reads and understands the comment, but s/he does not apply or even question the content of the comment? Is the intent of the instructor to encourage compliance to his or her guidelines? If the student does not understand, use, retain, or interpret the comment in the same manner as intended by the instructor, then communication—worse yet student learning—does not occur.

Statement of the Problem

Composition researchers and instructors have shown significant improvement in L2 student writing when comments were written in imperative forms or commands (Ferris, 1997). Conversely, the results of L1 studies investigating the use of direct imperatives show both positive (Straub, 1997; Straub & Lunsford, 1995) and negative (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Elbow, 1999) student improvement. This direct style has, according to researchers, various effects on students from both an instructional level and from a motivational level. On the one hand, many students see the role of the instructor as a person responsible for providing direct corrections to their work, and they expect the instructor to point out errors so the student can make the necessary corrections. This direct imperative style communicates to the student where his or her writing is deficient,

but unless it is followed by a detailed, easily comprehensible explanation of the reason that there is a problem, the student does not necessarily learn anything from the comment (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1982; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 1997).

From a motivational level, if the student views the comment as a direct command to make a change, the impetus is on the student following the direction of the instructor. The instructor is taking over as the author, devaluing the student's voice and replacing it with his or her own: appropriating the text (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982). Further, this direct style may be interpreted as offensive and/or condescending possibly discouraging student improvement (Ferris, 1996; Straub, 1997). The interpretation of the comment as offensive may be because of the language chosen by the instructor, or it could have little to do with the diction and be a cultural miscue based on the student's cultural background.

On an equally troubling note, an indirect commenting style—valuing the student's sense of personal voice—has been interpreted as offering suggestions that the L2 student is not required to take into consideration (Ferris, 2003; Reid, 1994). If the instructor is trying to explain to a student why a certain type of word or transition needs to be used, without taking over the student's essay through commands, s/he may adopt a softer syntax using questions or modals to encourage the student to see the instructor as an interlocutor and not an evaluator of the text. As a result, the student misses the instructor's subtle culturally defined subtext, and interprets the statement literally as an option. Furthermore, the instructor's soft syntax may be interpreted by the student as the instructor's uncertainty about the material, discrediting the instructor's professional credentials. Attempts to avoid appropriating the text in L1 research have shown students

predominantly react positively to statements which do not order changes, but in L2 research, Ferris (2003) argues that L2 students do not seem to mind and may actually prefer more direct commentary since L2 learners are not often as “sensitive to pragmatic distinctions between, for instance, imperatives and indirect requests, they may not be as resentful of a directive tone as L1 student writers might be…” (p. 17).

In both L1 and L2 environments, while the instructor’s goal in his or her comment is to communicate a problem, or identify an issue that needs the student’s attention, the very nature of the sentence structure may be interpreted by the student as a mere suggestion. This communication process is complex and contains several areas where the communication link between the instructor and the student can unravel. This unraveling has been well-documented in both L1 and L2 research investigating the communication link between the instructor’s intended meaning and the student’s interpretation of both written and oral communication (Ewald & Wallace, 1994; Hayes & Daiker, 1984; Michaels, 1987; Prior, 1991; Sperling & Freedman, 1987; Ulichny & Watson-Gegeo, 1989).

The student may interpret the meaning of the written comment by supplying definitions to the words, constructing the syntax of the comment, assigning that construct to a recognized sentence genre, and then reevaluating the different possible interpretations of the words both connotatively and denotatively before deciding on the meaning of the comment (Smith, 1997). That comment is now placed into the context of the communication medium: written response. The student may contextualize the comment based on his or her attitude toward the instructor, the class, the assignment, his or her cultural heritage, educational experience, academic success/failure, and/or the

manner in which s/he has heard the words in the comment used by previous instructors. Is this context related to how the student supplies a voice to the comment? What do the comments sound like to the L1 and L2 student when s/he reads the comments to himself or herself, and how is that interpretation related to the intended meaning from the instructor? Is the tone established by the instructor interpreted as supportive, sarcastic, nurturing, aggressive, condescending or in some other manner? Do the L1 and L2 students interpret the comments as unthreatening, friendly, passive, or even overly complimentary while the instructor wrote the comment with the intention to communicate a different tone? Is there some kind of tonal disconnect, and if so does that communication chasm influence how the student uses the comment? There is a lack of empirical research investigating how the intonation of written response is interpreted by L1 and L2 community college students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate native speaking (L1) community college students' and English Language Learners (L2) community college students' interpretations of instructor's written feedback on a multiple draft composition. It examined interpretations of expressive intonation and both groups' reactions to the form and placement of the comments, and how those interpretations affected the students' ability to understand the instructor's intended meaning of the comment.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions:

1. What are the instructor's general attitudes and specific expectations about his or her comments on L1 and L2 students' essays?

2. What are community college Native Speaking (L1) and Second Language Learner (L2) community college students' attitudes and expectations about instructors' written comments on their essays?
3. How is the expressive intonation of the instructor's written comments interpreted by the two distinct groups of students?

Theoretical Rationale

> There are no "neutral" words and forms—words and forms that can belong to "no one" [...]. All words have the "taste" of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day, and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones (generic, tendentious, individualistic) are inevitable in the word. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293)

The theoretical rationale for this study relies on the theories of Russian linguist and literary critic, Bakhtin, and his investigations into the complexity of communication. Although Bakhtin's primary academic study and publications revolved around the complexity of language as related to the interpretation of literary texts, his investigations into language interpretation are exhaustive forays into the use of language as it applies to any communicative act. Focusing on selections from two of his book length studies, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (1929/1981) and *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1979/1986), this study into students' interpretation of what Bakhtin calls expressive intonation in written response relies on his multilayered definition and analyses of the utterance as it relates to the complex context surrounding any communicative act; what Bakhtin (1986) calls speech genres. The use of the term expressive intonation in Bakhtin's (1986) work is crucial to the speech genre discussion. Expressive intonation, "serves as the material means for stitching together the said, in the speech of the speaker, and the unsaid, in the context of the situation" (Clark & Holquist,

1984, p. 208). Bakhtin (1986) purported that any serious investigation into expressive intonation must move away from the notion of defining words and focus on the relationship between the speaker and the listener in the moment of communication.

The application of Bakhtinian theories of utterance and speech genre to the field of Rhetoric and Composition, and specifically to the category of written response to student writing, may initially appear to be only tangential; both share a focus on the various ways in which language allows two individuals to communicate with one another. So why and how is a Bakhtinian theoretical approach to investigating the student's interpretation of the expressive intonation in written response applicable?

The rationale stems from Rhetoric and Compositions' researchers demand to recognize and create future studies, which take into account the complexity of the sociocultural and environmental context of the participants (Bazerman, 2004; Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Brice, 1995; Cavalcanti, 1990; Connors & Lunsford, 1993; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 2003; Paulus, 1999; Straub 1999). Bakhtin's (1986) concept of speech genre and utterance provide a manner to include more context while simultaneously providing a way of looking at expressive intonation as an instrumental element of communication.

Mikhail Bakhtin's theories about language, and the interpretation of language, originated in his early writings in Stalinist Russia as he investigated the language used in literature. In *Dialogic Imagination* (1981), he rails against the popular notion held by linguists of his time that each individual word taken, regardless of its contextuality, holds the key to the interpretation. Individuals like Ferdinand de Saussure (1966) saw the word as the key element of interpretive value—"[l]anguage is not a function of the speaker; it

is a product that is passively assimilated by the individual" (p. 14). Bakhtin (1986) disagreed with this established attitude toward language, arguing that such interpretations of language trapped communication in a contextual vacuum, where both the speaker/writer and listener/reader are decontextualized. Bakhtin purported that any in-depth investigation into the inherent meaning of a word could not exclude the importance of the social and cultural environment surrounding the participants in the communication in which the word was uttered. Bakhtin (1981) balked against the concept of a one-way communication link and proposed a more communal sense of communication: a dialogic communication.

Bakhtin (1986) argues that language comes intact with an extensive array of additional value laden components that communicate well beyond a singular denotative or connotative definition. The interpretive value of a word cannot be plucked from the context of the utterance and defined—every utterance is embedded in the complex inter/intra-action of the speaker/writer, listener/reader, time period, location, and cultural environment that envelopes the utterance. Bakhtin (1986) suggests that the primacy of this inseparability of the social/cultural mooring from the linguistic meaning begins at the very onset of language acquisition:

> Everything that pertains to me enters my consciousness, beginning with my name, from the external world through the mouths of others (my mother, and so forth), with their intonation, in their emotional and value-assigning tonality. I realize myself initially through others: from them I receive words, forms, and tonalities for the formation of my initial idea of myself. (p. 138)

A word or sentence when stripped from its context—cultural, personal, historical, situational—is dead.

In Bakhtin's (1981) early writings, the complexity of this communicative utterance—the complex system of all utterances and the interpretation of these—was

bound by what Bakhtin (1981) referred to as "heteroglossia." He argues that in any language there exist multiple languages defined and informed by the environment, time, external and internal forces, and tone. He identifies the utterance as the central component to communication; all communication is based on utterances or units of communicative value, which, according to Bakhtin (1981), are:

> …overlain with qualifications, open to dispute, charged with value, already enveloped in an obscuring mist-or, on the contrary, by the "light" of alien words that have already been spoken about it… The word, directed toward its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all this may crucially shape discourse, may leave a trace in all semantic layers, may complicate its expression and influence its entire stylistic profile. (p. 276)

These initial definitions laid the foundation for Bakhtin's (1981) literary investigations into the complexity of language as utilized in literature, but he would spend the next several decades exploring the components and features of the utterance and specifically how the interaction of utterances is related to different realms, or socially derived moments of human investigation: speech genres.

Bakhtinian Speech Genres

Bakhtin's (1986) essay, "The Problem of Speech Genres," is a detailed explanation of the utterance and speech genres. The bulk of the commentary in the essay focuses on how the different features of an utterance form real communicative meaning as they interact with particular spheres of human communication or speech genres. Each component of the speech genre is intricately interwoven with each other component, requiring that any investigation into the language of an utterance must include an investigation into the speech genre in which the utterance came into existence.

The first section of Bakhtin's (1986) essay defines an utterance as the use of concrete—written or spoken—language by an individual in a particular sphere of human communication. Bakhtin (1986) posits that the utterance, "reflect[s] the specific goals of each such area not only through [its] content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure" (p. 60). Bakhtin (1986) argues that thematic content, linguistic style, and compositional structure are inseparably linked together, creating the whole utterance. The meaning of the utterance is determined now only in accordance with the components of the situation in which it is used, including how that human activity is interpreted by the speaker/writer, listener/reader, his or her knowledge of each other, the topic, and the environment—the speech genre.

In an essay investigating the communicative interaction in Bakhtinian writing, Kent (1991/ 1998) provides a clear definition of a speech genre, as "…the utterance's social baggage in the sense that the utterance must take on a determinate and public form that communicants can identify. Consequently, the genre constitutes the public form that an utterance must assume in order to be comprehensible" (p. 41-42). The speech genre is the manner in which an utterance comes into meaningful existence.

In the current study, the speech genre was the communicative interaction of the instructor's written response on a college composition essay. In order to establish written response as the speech genre, a further explanation of Bakhtin's (1986) concept of speech genre is necessary.

Bakhtin (1986) categorizes speech genres into two general but overlapping camps: Primary Speech Genres and Secondary Speech Genres. Primary or simple speech

genres encompass the elements of formal and casual oral speech: the oral dialogue "—of the salon, of one's own circle, and other types as well, such as familiar, family every day, sociopolitical, philosophical and so on" (p. 65). Secondary or complex speech genres are —"novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary, and so forth—arise in more complex and comparatively highly developed and organized cultural communication (primarily written) that is artistic, scientific, sociopolitical, and so on" (p. 62).

In Bakhtin's (1986) theories, a single word, or a full-length novel are void of any inherent meaning until they enter a living moment. The utterance is the form of the language, and the speech genres are the, "*forms of combinations* of these forms" (Holquist, 1986, p. xvi).

Bakhtinian Utterance

Bakhtin (1986) defines the utterance having four interlocking principles: change of speaker, finalization, expressive intonation, or relation of utterance to speaker and to other participants, and addressivity. Each of these concepts are elaborated upon throughout Bakhtin's work—each comprised of several sub points and characteristics—and for the purposes of this theoretical rationale, only a synoptic discussion of these terms in conjunction with speech genres and written feedback will be necessary. The exhaustive nature of Bakhtin's description of the utterance's components and the complexity of how each component is simultaneously woven into and from the other components, makes providing a general linear synopsis challenging. In an effort to negotiate through these challenges, a brief explanation of the utterance will be provided

followed by a hypothetical demonstration of the concept within the context of written feedback as it relates to the current investigation.

Change of Speaking Subject

Central to the Bakhtinian utterance is the concept that in order for any usage of language to be meaningful (hence becoming an utterance) it must receive a response; it must have a change of speakers. The Bakhtinian utterance as a unit of communication has clear boundaries: a communicable physical beginning and a communicable physical end (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 71). As a unit of communication, it is preceded by the utterances of others, and it is followed by the responsive utterances, including silent responsive utterances of understanding, or the eventual active response. The nature of the boundary is determined by the relationship between the speaker and the listener in direct correlation to the sphere of activity: speech genre.

The boundaries of the utterance, especially in secondary speech genres, are identified by the speaker/writer through thematic content, linguistic style, or compositional structure, but only so far that the theme, style and structure common in that genre are identified by the listener/reader, cueing him or her of the end of the speaker/writer’s utterance, providing a response opportunity. This boundary is fairly visceral in live dialogue (Primary speech genres) because the change of speaking subjects is guided by both physical pauses and the speaker/writer and listener/reader’s acknowledgement of the speech genre in which both participants are engaged in during the communication. The most basic marker of the change of speakers in the speech genre of written response is signaled when the student submits his or her essay to the instructor—in a sense similar to a pause in verbal discussion.

In more complex written utterances, the utterance's boundaries are internally marked. The speaker/writer's individuality alludes to the change through his or her linguistic style (i.e. word, phrase selection), control of content (i.e. command of the genre's language and knowledge of its theories and conventions), and compositional structure (i.e. rhetorical strategy). In this way, the utterance distinguishes itself from the previous works in the same cultural sphere, creating in the listener/reader a responsive role whether immediate or delayed, vocal or silent, polemic, assentive, or a concessional response, thereby marking a change of speaking subjects—speaker/writer becomes listener/reader and vice versa. For an instructor providing feedback on an essay, this marker for this change of speakers is quite intricate. The instructor's concurrent role as listener/reader and speaker/writer is tenuous at best. When an instructor is listening/reading to the utterances of the student's essay, at what point does speaker/writer (the student in this case) signal for a change of speakers? The signal for this change of speakers is the second component of an utterance—finalization.

Finalization

Finalization occurs when the speaker/writer has completed the intended content of a communication, and it is marked by certain relatively stable, culturally determined criteria. The first mark of finalization is that it is possible to respond to the utterance. Bakhtin (1986) refers to this as the listener/reader "assuming a responsive attitude toward [the utterance]" (p. 76). Such a responsive attitude by the listener/reader occurs when the following three non-sequential factors are present. First, the listener/reader identifies a degree of semantic exhaustiveness of the theme. Second, based on the listener/reader's preexisting knowledge, both of the speaker and the topic, the listener/reader recognizes

the speaker/writer's speech plan or speech will. Third, finalization is complete when the listener/reader has identified the previous two points inside of the genre enveloping the utterance.

These three elements of finalization can be, but are not necessarily, sequential, and it is probable that the listener/reader's identification of this triad in the utterances of the speaker/writer occurs simultaneously. As the listener/reader hears the first words of the utterance, s/he recognizes the speech plan, relates it to other instances of similar speech plans, and by associating it with the level of semantic completeness, begins to predict its length in correlation to "… a particular speech genre" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 78).

The exhaustiveness of the theme, the evaluation of the speech will, the situation in which the utterance occurs, and the personal characteristics of the speaker/writer and listener/reader engaged in the utterance combine with the utterance toward the somewhat stable speech genre. These speech genres are vast and Bakhtin (1986) asserts that in many ways we are unaware of their existence because our familiarity with speech genres is learned in bits and pieces through our daily interactions, and are not catalogued in any concrete fashion. We learn to structure our utterances in accordance with the various speech genres in which we have learned the language:

> "we guess its genre from the very first words; we predict a certain length (that is, the approximate length of the speech whole) and a certain compositional structure, we foresee the end; that is, from the very beginning we have a sense of the speech whole, which is only later differentiated during the speech process" (p. 79).

Bakhtin (1986) further delineates the concept of speech genre through an exhaustive explanation of how the choice of a speech genre either (consciously or unconsciously) begins with the speaker/writer's utterance and that all other features of the utterance—change of speech subjects and the finalization or possibility of a responsive

attitude (including exhaustiveness of theme, speech will, and typical generic forms)—develop from and around the initial genre choice of the speaker/writer. The genre influences the features of the utterance in such a prescriptive, fundamental manner that the removal and analysis of one component of the utterance destroys the wholeness of the utterance's communicative nature, relegating it to decontextualized words or sentences. To some degree, the removal of one of these components becomes a separate utterance because the reader/listener has engaged and recanted the utterance in his or her voice where the utterance takes on a new life in the genre and speech plan of the new speaker/writer.

The three-part finalization of an utterance in the genre of written response is the signal for a responsive action from the instructor. However, as Bakhtin (1986) notes, the speech genre is usually determined from the first word in the utterance. From the instructor's point of view, as s/he reads the first word they have already placed themselves in the position as an evaluator (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982). With that placement, the exhaustiveness of the theme and the identification of the speech will have already been limited to the instructor's understanding of the genre of written response. This, in and of itself, is not necessarily detrimental to the communication unless the student who will be receiving the response has a different understanding of the written response genre from prior educational or cultural contexts, or no experience with the genre. For example, that may be the case for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or Second Language Learners (L2) whose educational experience did not include written response, or where the genre of written response has been completely different (Ferris, 2003).

In the genre of written response, the communication act is not finished after the instructor begins to scribe feedback for the student. The entire process begins again as the essay is returned to the student, marking the change of subjects. The student now becomes the reader/listener and when the first word is uttered, the student will have already decided on the genre of the written comment from the instructor. The complexity of this relationship between speaker/writer, listener/reader, and the content of the utterance, must now be considered as the third feature in Bakhtin's element of an utterance.

Expressive Aspect

Bakhtin's (1986) utterance features a change of the speaking subject, finalization or demanding a responsive attitude toward the utterance, and the third feature—the utterance's expressive intonation between the speaker/writer and the listener/reader; the listener/reader and the content; and the speaker/writer and the content. Bakhtin (1986) addresses the utterance's connection with the speaker/writer by categorizing the relationship into two coexisting elements. The first is the referential semantic content of an utterance or the decision to use certain linguistic and stylistic units of language over others given the speaker/writer's choice of a specific speech genre. The second, and more complex, is the distinction that the decision to use those specific words for the particular genre has no specific emotional meaning until they are given the speaker/writer's expressive evaluative attitude or expressive intonation, coupled with the speech plan, and chosen genre.

Bakhtin (1986) asserted that the utterance was not limited to the semantic meaning of the words, but that each choice becomes an utterance because it is chosen for

a particular genre, speech plan, and because it holds a different intonation based on how the speaker/writer uses the word in that real communication activity. For example, a speaker/writer may use a particular word with a specific emotional tenor, in a particular genre, as response to a particular speech plan for one audience and elicit one response. Then in another, the same speaker/writer may use the same word, with the same emotional value, in the same genre, but for a different listener/reader at a different moment in time and elicit a different response. Regardless of how similar the genre, speech plan, listener/reader, and environment are to one another, an utterance is not repeatable. Bakhtin (1986) attributes this to what he calls “expressive intonation” (p.85).

Expressive intonation is not an element of linguistic content inherent in the word or sentence itself, but is inextricably bound to the features of an utterance: change of speech subjects, finalization, responsive attitude of the listener/reader, genre choice, with a speaker/writer’s semantic content and his or her expressive intonation. While the most readily available examples of this expressive intonation are found in the primary speech genre most commonly associated with oral speech, Bakhtin (1986) is careful to point out that it is also present in secondary speech genres including the “silent reading of written speech” (p. 85).

Bakhtin (1986) also explores how and where a particular expressive intonation enters into the speaker/writer’s utterance. It is not created by the speaker/writer, but adapted from the expressive intonation of previous utterances from different speakers with which the speaker/writer has engaged in dialogue. As a result, a three-part explanation exists in regards to the origin of the expressive intonation for the speaker/writer: as a neutral word of the language found in the dictionary and devoid of

expressive intonation, as the word of another with the other's expressive intonation intact in the utterance, and in the speaker/writer's particular utterance (Bakhtin, 1986, p.87).

The utterances are reworked and re-accentuated only when the speaker/writer uses them in his or her own utterance. As the speaker/writer becomes more adept in a particular genre, certain words begin to take on genre specific meanings complete with certain typical expressive intonations (at which point they are no longer words but are utterances). The word becomes colored by its genre specific expressive intonation, and as it is used by a speaker/writer some aspects of its past use, "… [retain] …the tones and echoes of individual utterances" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 88).

The expressive intonation is further complicated by "the other" in that it is a component of an utterance and as such it cannot be separated from the fact that it itself is a response to previous uses of the utterance. As such, it also expresses the speaker/writer's attitude toward the other's speech plan as well as his or her own speech will in the utterance. Just as it cannot be distinguished from the preceding utterances, it is also irrevocably connected to the utterances that will follow it because every utterance must also take into account the listener/reader as an essential component of the wholeness of the communication act. As a complete concrete utterance, the speaker/writer must consider a response to the utterance by some listener/reader. The utterances preceding and following the speaker/writer's are linked in what Bakhtin (1986) terms "dialogic overtones" (p. 92). These overtones are the echoes of the utterance in the past and the potential reverberation of the utterance in the future, creating a metaphoric chain of speech communion.

In the context of the current investigation, this expressive intonation supplies a rationale for exploring the genre of written response. In the genre of written feedback, the student and the instructor are both listener/reader and speaker/writer in a revolving door of communication. As an instructor writes comments on a student essay, the expressive intonation transforms the words into genre specific utterances that elicit a change of speakers by signaling the components of finalization, and evokes a response to a dialogic audience composed of the previous utterances and the student's utterances, and the future responsive utterances to the immediate communicative activity.

As a student reads the first word of the first comment, s/he crosses the border of the change of speakers and as the elements of finalization are identified—genre identified, responsive position assumed, exhausted theme apparent, and the speaker's communicative plan predicted—the expressive intonation of the student, as it is derived from the student's previous experiences with the utterances that are common of his or her history with the written response genre, influences the student's reactive process. The expressive intonation of the previous utterances from the student's past instructors' comments on the student's essays echo and reverberate in the current utterance, and are intonated as the student responds either immediately, internally, or at a later date to the immediate speaker/writer.

Addressivity

The addressee of the utterance represents Bakhtin's (1986) fourth and final constitutive feature of the utterance. Bakhtin's (1986) notion of the addressee purports the dependency of the speaker/writer and his or her expressive intonation. The addressee is to whom the utterance is addressed, and as such is defined in correlation with the

speech genre the speaker/writer chose during finalization. The utterance is directed not only toward a particular addressee, but also in regards to the speaker/writer's assumptions about the addressee, and how the addressee will respond to the utterance. Bakhtin (1986) clarifies the interplay between the speaker and addressee as going beyond just what the speaker/writer knows and feels about the addressee to the interplay between the addressee and the subject, the speaker/writer's interpretation of the addressee's knowledge of the content, and between the speaker/writer and the subject.

The speaker/writer is—at the same time—the addressee in a responsive role to either the particular addressee and the previous utterances, which have sparked his or her response, and the speaker/writer is the addressee of the previous utterances and potential future responsive utterances. In either case, the speaker/writer's choice of the speech genre is simultaneously determined as the speaker/writer imagines how his or her speech will be perceived by the addressee. The addressee's familiarity with the situation, his or her knowledge of the cultural area of communication, his or her convictions and opinions, possible biases, and any other characteristics which will not only impact the choice of the genre, compositional devices, and linguistic forms, but also predict the possibility of the addressee taking an active responsive position, or at least an active responsive understanding of the utterance.

An additional complication to the selection of the genre is the more ethereal and social relationship between the speaker/writer and the addressee, and how that relationship alters the speaker/writer's and addressee's chain of communication: "…the title, class, rank, wealth, social importance, and age of the addressee and the relative position of the speaker (or writer)" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 96). At the same time, the

addressee can also be the speaker/writer in which case the same classification and investigation would occur. It is important to note that in any discussion of a speech genre, the genre is not so formalized by the human content sphere of communication that it is incapable of having varying degrees of complexity. For example, if a speaker/writer determines that an addressee is not at the same level of competency in his or her chosen genre, aspects of the utterance under the umbrella of a particular genre can be stretched, manipulated, or even merged with another genre to accommodate the addressee's concerns and/or unfamiliarity with the genre and the utterance.

Written Response as Bakhtin's Speech Genre

A student's ability to interpret the Bakhtinian "expressive intonation" of written comment (utterance) in the relatively stable genre of written response, the instructor as the speaker/writer of the response begins the process as the listener/reader as s/he works through the student's essay. The role s/he assumes is as an evaluator who has been charged with the duty of enforcing the standards of the academic world of formal composition and guiding the student toward the production of "the ideal text" (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982, p. 160). The instructor enters into the discussion with an "ideal text" not only based on the rules established in class and reinforced by the academic community, but also from the voices of his or her previous instructors, and his or her own educational experience with the genre of written comments (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1984; Reichelt, 2003).

The first quality of assuming a responsive position for the instructor is determined in commenting style. Does s/he read the essay in its entirety as a complete utterance, providing comments after reading the essay in its entirety? Does the process more closely

resemble a running commentary where the instructor determines multiple signals of finalization through the text, providing multiple responsive reactions in a type of responsive gauntlet of commentary? Do the end comment and grade represent the finalization, establishing a final expressive intonation for the whole of the utterance? In any instance, from the moment the instructor begins reading the student essay s/he chooses a genre, interprets the speech plan of the student, assumes an active responsive role, and employs the characteristics of finalization and addressivity to the whole of the utterance—the student essay.

The genre in which the instructor chooses to begin his or her active response is that of written response. However, the commentary style, compositional structure, and theme are surrounded by the speech will of a commenter (instructor) whose plan is to provide supportive, guiding comments geared towards the student's successful adherence to the structural, organizational, linguistic standards of the academy; thereby, becoming better writers, communicators, and members of the academic speech genre.

The speech genre of written response may have a subtle difference in speech will or speech plan, and as research suggests some instructors may have a secondary intent for assuming an active responsive position to the student's essay. In recent research, some educators have concluded a secondary and considerably less pedagogical intention in commenting: comments as grade justification and not comments as pedagogical suggestions for improving writing (Black & William, 1998; Giltrow & Valiquette, 1997; Ketter & Hunter, 1997). Each response to the text combines to reveal the speech will of the whole utterance in the form of a grade. If the instructor assumes this speech plan as s/he crafts comments, and the student upon receiving his or her essay views comments as

an explanation for the grade with little or no pedagogical merit, then the communicative act is successful, but the academic community's speech plan in the genre of the written comment has not been correctly identified.

This secondary speech genre of written response is littered with both the past and eventual future utterances of other researchers, teachers, practitioners, previous teachers, administrative policies, academia, and students. All of whom interact with the speaker/writer's past experiences and are guided by the expressive intonation of typical utterances bound by the genre. The change of speaking subjects back to the student is physically carried out by the transfer of the essay back to the student.

As the student engages in the commentary, s/he is the listener/reader, but the manner in which s/he begins to assume an active responsive role may be from an inherently different position (Holt, Viola, Pruitt, & Rankin, 2001). The student's experience with written comments in the past may not have included an opportunity to assume an active responsive role and to revise the essay. This disconnect could lead the student to associate the instructor's utterance to a different genre that better reflects his or her non-responsive role. At this critical turn, all aspects of the instructor's utterance in the written feedback genre are now revoiced by the student into a new genre where the very words, being uttered in a new environment, have different expressive intonations. The expressive intonation of the student in voicing these utterances could result in everything from the student taking offense to the mis-genred comment to the student misunderstanding the comment from within another relatively stable genre.

Using these concepts toward an interpretation of teacher commentary on student essays, one can understand the possible difficulty students and teachers may have when

they interact in the forum of written response. The heteroglossia of the classroom is riddled with complex interactions. In this complex process of interpretation, one of the key elements to the communicative nature of the utterance is the tone used by the speaker/writer and the listener/reader when they communicate. Students bring with them various languages both literal (i.e. Chinese, Russian, English, Spanish) and ideological (public, personal, professional, school, home, family, etc). When an instructor makes a comment on an essay, the words used are not just being informed by the writer/reader's present state of mind, but also by other semantic and situational definitions and prior uses, including the time, environment, events, and results surrounding a previous utterance of the word or phrase.

Significance of the Study

There are a number of ways in which this study contributed to the body of research on written response. Researchers investigating written comments have been clamoring for more studies that provide the inclusion of more aspects of the context of the classroom, the student, and the instructor (Bazerman, 2004; Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Brice, 1995; Cavalcanti, 1990; Connors & Lunsford, 1993; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 2003; Fife & O’Neill, 2001; Paulus, 1999; Straub, 1999). This study contextualized itself in the lives of the participants, the college, the class, the assignment, the style of commenting, and the instructor.

The results of this study can lead to further research into the importance of the interpretation of intonation in the composition classroom, furthering the investigation into providing feedback. Furthermore, if a connection can be made between a student's interpretation of the expressive intonation in written feedback to student success,

instructors, administrators, and students themselves may be able to improve the quality of their interactions. In addition, more elaborate measures could be taken to help instructors improve their comments and help students read and interpret an instructor's feedback. The study added evidence into the ongoing conversation as to just how effective written comments are in general, and could lead to the exploration of other methods of feedback where more measures can be taken to account for tonal misunderstandings.

In general, the research was sparse in its investigation of community college writing students in general. Since this study investigated first and second language learners of English at community colleges, the results of this study provided useful information for community college instructors while also providing a blueprint for others to use to further investigate similar themes at other sites. Moreover, the current study added to the few studies that have investigated both first and second language learners of English in the same classroom. The benefits of having linguistic diversity in the classroom, as well as cultural and ethnic diversity, have not been adequately represented in the literature, and this study presented data that may help others to understand some of the complexities and benefits of diversity in the classroom.

Definition of Terms

Expressive Intonation—the tone that is determined not by the content of the utterance and not by the experiences of the speaker, but by the relationship of the speaker to the personality of the other speaker in the live speech environment.

L1–The acronym used to reference an individual’s first language or native language. In this study L1 refers to individuals whose only fluent language is English.

L2—The acronym used to distinguish the language acquisition status for an individual who has or is learning an additional language to his or her native language. In this study, L2 is referencing individuals who are learning or have learned English as a second language.

Attitude- is operationally defined as the formation of an individual's understanding of written response based on that individual's past experiences with written comments.

Expectation- is defined as how an individual's "attitude" is reinforced or altered based on his or her experience and relationship with a new student or instructor prior to providing or receiving feedback in the form of written comments.

Written Response- The practice of providing written instruction on a student's essay. This is the terminology used to refer to any aspect of the instructor's process in creating comments or the student's process of receiving and interpreting comments from an instructor.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to compare and contrast how native speaking (L1) and English Language Learner (L2) community college students interpret instructor's written feedback on an essay. It examined interpretations of tone and both groups' reactions to the form and placement of the comments, and how those interpretations affected the students' writing process. The review of literature is divided into four component areas.

The first section provided a general overview of the field of written response at the college level for both L1 and L2 students, surveying the general assumptions and relatively stable feedback practices in the literature. This section also includes a brief discussion of some of the alternative methods to written feedback such as peer editing, conferencing, and audio recording and how these methods have influenced current written feedback practices. Finally, this first section discusses a few L1 and L2 landmark studies, and how these early studies still energize studies of written response to student writing.

The second section discusses the reported strengths and weaknesses of various different forms of written feedback in both L1 and L2 disciplines. This section investigates the methods researchers have utilized to discern strengths and weaknesses in written feedback forms. In addition, this section addresses the attitudes and expectations of L1 and L2 instructors at two and four-year colleges have about written response, and how those ideals compare with one another and academia.

The third section is an overview of the research that has been published on how L1 and L2 students react to written feedback. This section covers the attitudes and expectations students have about receiving written response. Since both positive and negative reactions to feedback are based upon how adequately or inadequately a response meets expectations, this section also investigates how a student's prior knowledge and experiences in academia have been represented in the literature.

The final section explores the power relationship between instructors and L1and L2 students. This section discusses the research that accounts for the instructor-student relationship in the investigation of written feedback. This section also discusses how the context of the classroom, the assignment, and the instructor relate to written feedback interpretations. It also ties together how the power struggles may be transmitted by tone. Finally, the absence of research into the tone of voice in written response is discussed.

Overview of Feedback on Writing Assignments

In order to investigate how students interpret written feedback in a college composition course, a researcher must have an understanding of the origins of the current practices and theories about written feedback. The practices employed in written feedback were not created in a vacuum; different methods of providing feedback were directly linked to the changes that took place in the instructional methodology of the classroom. Unfortunately, when the methodology for delivering content to the students in a writing class changed, the methodology for providing feedback did not change at the same time.

The first sub-section in this overview of feedback historicizes the impact of the paradigm shift from the product-based model to the process-based model of writing

instruction, and how that shift in classroom methodologies influenced the manner in which instructors approached providing written feedback. This sub-section then discusses some of the generally acceptable theories about the purpose of response as situated in the process paradigm, and how the role of the new process-based response theories influences instructors, researchers, administrators, and students.

The next subsection on written response describes how some of the complex problems surrounding written feedback on student essays spawned drastically different approaches to feedback outside of just written feedback that have, in recent years, gained popularity either as a replacement for written feedback, or as an additional support for the time intensive process of providing written feedback on essays. The final subsection illustrates the importance of three landmark studies from early years of the process-based paradigm that have established the foundation for most of the research on feedback in both L2 and L1 learning environments (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981; Sommers, 1982).

Composition History: Shifting from Product to Process

A recurring critique of studies investigating various aspects of response theory at the college level is that researchers often do not contextualize the research to the classroom, instructor, student, and the complex interrelations between these contextual components (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1984; Brice, 1995; Chin, 1994; Evans, 1997; Ferris, 2003; Prior, 1997; Straub, 1999; Sommers, 1982; Tsui, 2000). In many cases, studies are conducted looking specifically at the impact of a new manner of coding, listing, or recording comments on students' essays without giving adequate attention to the classroom practices utilized by the instructor, especially in relation to the specific writing

prompt and the instructor's classroom demeanor (Evans, 1997; Ferris, 2003; Straub, 1996; Tsui, 2000). In order to establish the backdrop for the study of response theory, response theory must be contextualized inside of the larger attitudes toward teaching writing.

For much of the twentieth century, writing instruction was rooted in a product-based paradigm. Classroom practices and department policies centered on the student's successful completion of a final essay, without any guidance or instruction on how to create a final essay (Faigley, 1986/1990; Hairston, 1982). Instruction and classroom activities focused on discussions of published literature and non-fiction, typically in lecture format with the instructor as the sole authority figure and purveyor of knowledge, and the student as the recipient of knowledge: banking model of education (Freire, 1998).

Hairston (1982) delineated the essential components of the product-based traditional paradigm into three principles: First, the belief that students know what they intend to write before they begin writing; second, that writing was linear, progressing from prewriting to writing to rewriting; and finally, that teaching the rules and accepted academic practices of editing, grammar, and punctuation was how to teach writing.

The traditional product paradigm's approach of providing written feedback focused on responding only to the student's final product. Comments at that stage of the writing were the only way to learn how to write because writing could be learned only by writing and grammar instruction—writing could never be taught directly. In the product-based paradigm, students were not encouraged to revise documents, and any comments written on a student's essay were, by their design and function, one-way directive transmissions—from the instructor to the student, and perhaps only from the instructor to

the text. Students had no choice but to view any comments from the instructor and the grade as final. At best, the student could take these comments and apply them to the next assignment; that is of course, assuming the comment was understood.

Gradually a shift toward the view of writing pedagogy as a process took hold. Hairston (1982) described the new process-based paradigm as a composite of the following features:

1. It focuses on the writing process; instructors intervene in student writing during the process.
2. It teaches strategies for invention and discovery, instructors help students to generate content and discover purpose.
3. It is rhetorically based; audience, purpose, and occasion figure prominently in the assignment of writing tasks.
4. Instructors evaluate the written product by how well it fulfills the writer's intention and meets the audience's needs.
5. It views writing as a recursive rather than linear process; pre-writing, writing, and revision are activities that overlap and intertwine.
6. It is holistic, viewing writing as an activity that involves the intuitive and non-rational as well as the rational faculties.
7. It emphasizes that writing is a way of learning and developing as well as a communication skill.
8. It includes a variety of writing modes, expressive as well as expository.
9. It is informed by other disciplines, especially cognitive psychology and linguistics.
10. It views writing as a disciplined creative activity that can be analyzed and described; its practitioners believe that writing can be taught.
11. It is based on linguistic research and research into the composing process.
12. It stresses the principle that writing instructors should be people who write. (p.13)

Process-based writing instruction saw writing as a cognitive exercise which at times followed linear patterns—invention, brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing. However, writing was not limited to this one path, and the possibility of writing following a more sporadic pattern was acknowledged as a viable process--moving from writing to invention to outlining, back to writing to brainstorming, back to outlining to revision (Brand, 1989; Emig, 1971; Perl, 1971/2002). Theorists and educational

practitioners, such as Elbow (1973) and Garrison (1974), designed early examples of scaffolded assignments, where the student completed sections of an essay over a period of time with the continual interaction and guidance of the instructor through the process. Along with changes in the delivery of material in the classroom, process-based theories about written response to student writing also underwent substantial investigation (Griffin, 1982; Haswell, 1983; Horvath, 1984; Kehl, 1980; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1982; Larson, 1974; Lees, 1979; Sommers, 1982).

The early research by Elbow (1973) and Garrison (1974) provided a methodology for teaching through a process model; however, the added attention to each stage of the student's writing meant additional time outside of the class for instructors to respond to the writing. As a result, different educational practitioners designed various approaches to providing students with feedback. Tactics for relieving some of the pressure to respond to every draft from every student were developed or modified to adhere to the process-based paradigm (Elbow, 1998; Haswell, 1983; Horvath, 1984). With the new attention to the process of writing, the task of providing feedback on multiple drafts became significantly more time consuming (Haswell, 1983; Horvath, 1984).

As a result, early response theories of the era promoted timesaving tactics for the instructor. Haswell (1983) encouraged instructors to abandon the practice of marking error and to replace it with what he termed "minimal marking," placing a check mark in the margin, drawing a student's attention to the error, cutting down on the grading time of the instructor while encouraging students to proofread more carefully. Horvath (1984) determined that providing too many comments overwhelmed students and promoted the still popular idea of commenting on content in early drafts, and providing comments on

form on later drafts. He also suggested that too many comments on an essay made it difficult for students to see all problems as of equal importance. Finally, he noted that instructors needed to be careful not to frame comments in a manner that students may deem as an attack on his or her ideas or writing ability.

Alternative Feedback Methods

The multiple draft process assignment required instructor feedback at various points in the writing process, but the current staple method of providing written feedback utilized during the product-based paradigm had not changed with the process movement. Instructors were overwhelmed, not only by the additional time needed to provide feedback, but also with the inherent difference in providing feedback on a draft that would be resubmitted at a later date. Their comments were now more conversational. In response, researchers and practitioners began developing techniques that alleviated some of the time spent commenting and simultaneously embraced the new ways the comments would be used by the students (Anson, 1989; Elbow, 1974; Matsuhashi, Gillam, Rance, Conley, & Moss, 1989; Newkirk, 1989).

Peer Response

The field of peer response workshops allowed students to share their work with their classmates. This fostered a large body of research on audience, as now the instructor was not seen as the only audience for individual student writing. The feedback students received from these workshops allowed them to see the response an audience had to a piece of writing and to make modifications to the text based on that audience feedback. Elbow (1973) expressed interest in creating an environment where students were working without instructors, in hopes that students would be able to view the instructor as a reader

and not as an evaluator. Others have noted the benefit of instructors becoming active readers in peer workshops, but regardless of the instructor's role in the workshop as reader, students knew that in the end the instructor would be giving them a grade (Ferris, 2003). Elbow (1973) maintained that the benefits to student confidence in this method could overshadow the negative reports of the instructor as evaluator.

Additionally, peer response simultaneously met the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (1974) call for "Students' Right to Their Own Language" as each person's voice was heard in the class, and each person's diverse language, culture, and ethnic background was embraced. Still other theorists presented evidence of the benefit of the instructor being an active part of the workshops, deemphasizing the instructor's role as evaluator and portraying the instructor as a fellow writer (Emig, 1971; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hacker, 1996; Newkirk, 1984; Zamel, 1982, 1985, 1987).

L2 researchers began to explore the potential of peer feedback in ESL classrooms (Belcher, 1994; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Siato, 1994). This fascination quickly diminished as a few initial studies reported less than stellar benefits. Connors and Asenavage (1994) reported the benefits of the traditional instructor response was 34% more likely to motivate students to revise while peer feedback only had a 1-6% motivation rate. In another survey study, Zhang (1995) reported that when given the choice between instructor and non-instructor feedback, 94% preferred instructor feedback. However, when given a choice between peer feedback and self-directed feedback, 61% chose peer feedback. As a result, in L2 studies many instructors began to use both written feedback and peer response in tandem with one another.

Although its success was not as promising in L2, peer response did have its critics in L1 who protested against the peer review process, citing numerous examples of how peer workshops made it more difficult for students to see the distinction between what was considered to be academic prose, and the less formal prose from the students' lives (Bartholomae, 1980; 1986).

Possibly the most damaging critique of peer editing was that while its intentions were to teach students that writing was a process that involved interaction with a community of readers, it did not change the fact that the essay will eventually be graded by the instructor. Thus, the instructor will likely fall back on time-honored criteria cards, making corrections mostly on surface errors, placing a grade on the essay, and returning it to the student.

Student-Teacher Conferences

Beginning in the 1980's, instructors searched for methods of providing feedback to students which would simultaneously cut back on the number of hours instructors spent providing written feedback (Freedman & Katz, 1987; Rose, 1982; Walker, 1987). The pressure to provide more detailed feedback on multiple drafts of students' essays resulted in instructors clamoring for alternative measures to written comments that would alleviate some of the time-intensive written feedback. Many researchers in both L1 and L2 research communities utilized student-instructor conferences in the hopes that the direct nature of a one-on-one conversation would be able to cover more material in a shorter time frame (Elbow, 1973; Freedman, 1987; Freedman & Katz, 1987; Freedman & Sperling, 1985; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Hacker 1996; Newkirk, 1984; Prior, 1998; Rose, 1982; Walker, 1987; Zamel, 1982; 1985). Carcinelli (1980) was so enthusiastic

about the early indications of success that Carcinelli proposed doing away with face-to-face classroom meetings all together. Conferences early popularity was fueled by the benefits of the immediate two-way-communication.

The assumption was that students would be able to enter into an open dialogue with instructors in a writing conference (Carnicelli, 1980; Elbow, 1973; Barbier, 1997). Carcinelli (1980) recommended that instructors create methods to introduce students to the conference's purpose, structure, and language in order to maximize the benefits for the students.

Audio Recorded Feedback

Using tape recorders as a method of commenting on student's writing has been present in the literature since Farnsworth (1974) employed the technique in an intermediate-advanced ESL writing class. The practice has been lauded by many researchers as an overwhelming success (Anson, 1999; Clark, 1982; Farnsworth, 1974; Mellen & Sommers, 2003) and perceived as ineffective by others (Yarbro & Angevine, 1982; Sommers, 1996). In all of these studies, however, the definition of "success" is not the same. The use of the audiocassette recorder by most of the researchers in this response style was not to replace written commentary, rather to enhance it. Much like the peer-review and conferences, using cassette recorders aids in the instructors overarching goal of helping students to become better writers (Anson, 1999; Mellen & Sommers, 2003).

Anson (1999) discussed many reasons supporting the use of audio-recorded commentary. When one of his students sustained an eye injury, she asked Anson if he could record his comments about her essay on a cassette recorder. Anson (1999)

complied with the request and after finishing the recording, he found the solution to many of the problems he had with written comments. Echoing the complaints of earlier researchers Brannon and Knoblauch, (1982), Anson (1999) has never been comfortable with the process of providing evaluative comments on students work. Like Sommers (1982) and Brannon and Knoblauch (1982), who warn instructors about entering into the process of evaluating writing with an ideal text to which students' essays will be compared against, Anson (1999) was searching for a response method that would allow him to be more than the decontextualized evaluator in the margins and at the end of the essay. He found, in recording his comments, a "social dimension to [his] commentary that had been less present in [his] short, often corrective written remarks" (p. 166).

Anson (1999) asserts several reasons explaining why his written comments are more impersonal and lack context compared to the audio commentary. The first is simply the essay load associated with teaching composition is not conducive to the amount of time that would be necessary to complete written comments necessary to communicate the same level of individualized personal attention to the student and the text. Secondly, Anson (1999) suggests that the editorial nature of written comments does not "lend itself to such expansion" (p. 166). For Anson (1999), the cassette feedback became a way for him to remain in his role as an evaluator, and simultaneously demonstrate his presence as a reader to the students. Although his essay is not research based, he reports positive reactions to the cassettes from his students, and suggests his instructor evaluations have also reflected their satisfaction with the method. The benefits of this process to the students, Anson (1999) notes, are substantial: feedback is more detailed, it can be

reviewed multiple times, it allows students to hear the reader's thoughts and easily relate comments to class discussion.

In a more recent study, Mellen and Sommers (2003) present arguments for the inclusion of tape-recorded comments into a writing teacher's repertoire of response styles. The emphasis on the benefits of this method for Mellen and Sommers is contextual in itself. Mellen and Sommers promote recorded comments because of who the students are—community college students. They justify this claim by analyzing several studies investigating the attitudes and characteristics of community college students. From their investigation, Mellen and Sommers identify a pattern of common traits: highly gregarious and social; prefer oral over written communication; and often ambivalent about education. From their own research projects on community college students, Mellen and Sommers add to this list of traits that their students are usually older than traditional four-year college students, currently working, married, parents, more driven, and paradoxically, more confident about their writing, yet more fearful about being evaluated. Mellen and Sommers argue that the paradox is exactly why they feel the community college campus is the ideal location for recorded feedback. By utilizing a feedback method that is oral in nature and different from these students' previous experiences with education, they suggest that recorded comments may be able to relieve this tension.

Mellen and Sommers (2003) continue the discussion, reporting on an earlier study by Sommers (1989) which added that recording comments is more time-efficient for instructors with more students. Referencing another Sommers' (1996) study investigating

students' reactions to recorded comments, Mellen and Sommers (2003) describe the findings of the survey and provide some additional insight into Sommers' (1996) study.

The survey asked three sections of Sommers' (1996) college composition class at a community college to respond to three questions about the recorded comments. The first asked students to estimate what percentage of the comments on the recording they thought were praising or positive comments. The second question asked what percentage the student felt were negative, and finally what percentage of the comments are neither positive nor negative, but more like suggestions. Ninety-four percent of the students reported that over 10% of the comments were positive, and 90 % reported that over 10% of the comments were more like suggestions. Forty percent of the students reported that less than 10% of the comments were negative.

In addition to the survey, Sommers (1996) asked the students in two of the classes to describe how they felt after listening to the recording. He provided the following prompts (percent of students), and allowed the students to select more than one of the following statements: too discouraged to want to revise (10.8%); confused (29.7%); encouraged to want to revise (70.2%); bored (16.2%); angry or irritated (13.5%); and more confident about my writing (54% benefited the instructor (referenced in Mellen & Sommers, 2003, p.32). Sommers is troubled by the percentage of students reporting confusion, boredom, and anger, and introduces his co-writer Mellen into the discussion.

Mellen was a student in one of Sommers' recent composition classes, and her involvement in Mellen and Sommers' (2003) study as a participant/author is designed to investigate a typical community college student's apprehensions about writing, and to

examine if Mellen and Sommers' (2003) initial claim that recorded comments are ideal for the confident yet apprehensive community college student in the current population.

Mellen and Sommers (2003) provide background information about Mellen's attitude and prior experience with composition. She had been out of school for twenty years, and in describing her experience in college composition twenty years ago as being unsuccessful, degrading, and discouraging, leading her to describe her enrollment in Sommers composition course as something she had been dreading. Mellen also discusses her feelings about writing for some of her recent classes in Educational Psychology and Theater where the respective instructors made explicit comments to the class that conventional issues of grammar and punctuation would not be considered in the grading criteria. She reflects on her writing experiences in these classes with a positive attitude, even concluding that she was a more confident writer, knowing that grammar and punctuation were not part of the evaluation criterion.

Mellen and Sommers (2003) suggest that Mellen's description of her writing experience is typical of the students at the community college. He explains that Mellen's ability to write successfully in her other classes reflects her strength on holistic structural attributes, placing little value on the sentence level issues, which are related to her apprehension of evaluation. Furthermore, using Mellen's words from a writing reflection letter he asked his students to compose, he explains that Mellen specifically stated in the letter that she found recorded commentary to be useful. The question that Mellen and Sommers (2003) are now faced with is how the comments were helpful.

In Mellen and Sommers (2003), Mellen provides a reflective explanation of how she used the recorded comments as a manner for investigating how the comments are

useful to her. She explains the process in detail. She would listen to the entire recording once, and then she would get her essay and listen again, noting the places where Sommers had made a specific textual reference in the recording, stopping occasionally to make changes and explore suggestions. Next, she read her essay again with her additions, changes, and notations. Finally, Mellen suggests her last step would be to "rework the draft, using whatever comments I had agreed with" (Mellen & Sommers, 2003, p. 34).

When Mellen specifically addresses what she likes about the comments, she notes the recorded comments are easier to use to determine the instructor's context for the comment than with written response. She explains that her meaning for context here in reference to written comments is specifically comments that appear to have been written quickly, providing no direction (i.e. good, unclear, etc). She explains her frustration with written comments of this nature as being so vague that at times she becomes defensive, noting that the difference for her with the recorded comments is that the written feedback lacks "the vocal tone" whereas with the tapes, "[she] not only has the words being spoken, but also the inflection, pauses, emphasis to guide [her]. What would seem the harshest criticism, were it merely written, becomes much more palatable when softened by a concerned and interested tone of voice. [She's] more open to the suggestion. [She tries] harder to understand what is being said without feeling violated. By [the tape recordings] very nature, it is more personal" (Mellen & Sommers, 2003, p. 34). Mellen acknowledges that the lack of the face-to-face conversation in a conference allows for an even more intimate conversation; however, she then recants the benefit of the face-to-face conference noting it is not time-efficient, but primarily arguing that the recording is

better because it is easier to accept criticism and praise when she is not looking at the instructor.

Another benefit she notes is that if she listens to a comment and is upset by it initially she can replay it. By listening to the tone, she hears a different intent from the instructor that she missed the first time she heard it. She addresses the power struggle between the instructor and student, and explains that the distance allotted by the recording allows criticism from “someone else, especially if the critic is a person of *supposedly* [italics added] superior knowledge of the art form” (Mellen & Sommers, 2003, p. 34). Her challenge of the instructor’s knowledge is not meant to sound arrogant. She later explains that she is now older and cannot be as easily influenced, as she was when she took her class twenty years ago.

Mellen identifies another strength of the recorded comments to be the depth of the description and explanations, noting that, even she found herself writing short comments on classmates’ essays in peer workshop groups because of the time constraints involved in written response and the possibility of someone misunderstanding her intent and taking offense. In regards to whether Mellen thinks recorded comments would benefit a particular age group over another, she thinks they are beneficial to both young and old, but for different reasons. The older students will get more out of hearing a voice, and the younger students, who might not follow up on a written comment they do not understand have the more detailed comments on the recording.

Mellen also mentions that the recorded comments make her feel more like she is the professor’s equal, and the comments instilled a sense of trust and a reinforcement of the instructor’s credibility. She also notes that the use of words like “vivid,” “interesting,”

and "detailed" as he reflected on her work boosted her confidence and made it easier for her to listen rationally to the criticism that followed. In addition, she notes that his use of introductory phrases like "I'm just brainstorming" and "You *might* include" made her feel as though he was just giving examples and that he was sure that she would create something even better than his suggestions.

Mellen begins to conclude her explanation of the first taped comment session doubting that written comments could have possible instilled the trust, encouragement, suggestions, and criticism in such a respectful manner. Her final two points explain how she could hear the instructor's son's pet bird chirping in the background, driving home the notion that the person on the other end of the comment is a real person and not just symbolic textual signs. In her concluding remark, she returns to the importance of the instructor's tone of voice stating: "that his vocal tone was encouraging throughout, something that is lost in quick written notes" (Mellen & Sommers, 2003, p. 36).

Landmark Response Studies

The use of audio cassettes as a means of providing feedback has not really gained popularity largely because of temporal and technological limitations, and although the use of peer feedback and conferences have become commonplace in writing classes, neither have replaced written feedback. Certain assumptions for any type of feedback, regardless of the modality, developed as a result of several influential studies conducted in the 1980's (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981; Sommers, 1982).

The purpose of the instructor's written comment is to help the student learn how to write better and to encourage seeing writing as a revision centered process, but a

disparaging study by Knoblauch and Brannon (1981) questioned the validity of written comments. Knoblauch and Brannon's (1981) results of their research review, "Teacher Commentary on Student Writing: The State of the Art," had a profound effect on the next two decades of research.

Knoblauch and Brannon (1981) analyzed studies advocating the use of comments that praised student writing, as opposed to more critical comments. The study investigated published research covering several different approaches to providing feedback on student essays: using oral comments over written comments and vice versa, whether marginal comments or end (summative) comments were better, benefits and drawbacks to comments correcting errors, comments identifying errors, comments identifying an error and explaining the rule for the error, comments using abbreviations or stylistic marks (awk., frag., etc,) and studies purporting the benefits of extensive, fostering and supportive comments.

The disturbing conclusion was that none of the commenting methods led to a noticeable improvement in the quality of student writing. Knoblauch & Brannon (1981) reported that the conclusions drawn by most of the researchers in these studies was that students did not read the comments, did not understand them, or did not see the value in reading the comments because they were not offered as an opportunity to revise the essay. The results of Knoblauch & Brannon's (1981) analysis of the literature offered several promising points for future study.

Most notable was the research of Ziv (1981) which showed improvement in student writing when the assignment allowed for multiple-drafts using both explicit and implicit suggestions from the instructor. What Knoblauch and Brannon (1981) speculated

as a contributing factor to the results of Ziv's (1981) study, as well as to the negative results from other studies, is the lack of attention to the complex relationship that is established in the classroom between the instructor and the student. The context of the classroom and the relationship between the student and the instructor are crucial.

Although Knoblauch and Brannon's (1981) findings and assumptions were based solely on a relaxed content analysis research design of other studies, their investigation and call for more research into the instructor-student relationship proved of lasting value to the rhetoric and composition field. Their research led to a different way of thinking about student comments. Knoblauch and Brannon (1981) encouraged future researchers to devise methods for post feedback revision strategies that ensure students understand the commenting jargon used by instructors, present revision strategies for students, and promote facilitative comments.

The next year Sommers (1982) acknowledged a gap between the theoretical investigations of the new paradigm, and the actual implementation of these theories in the classroom. Sommers' (1982) study investigated Knoblauch and Brannon's (1981) conclusion that educators should write comments that assist students in the writing process and motivate students to revise in the next draft. From her experience as a researcher and an educator, Sommers (1982) questioned whether educators employed and students applied the comments in the classroom.

Sommers (1982) and Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) jointly conducted a study, publishing separate articles in the same edition of *College Composition and Communication*. The study involved 35 professors from two universities: New York University and University of Oklahoma. The instructor's courses modeled a process-

based approach to writing instruction, which promoted multiple drafts from the students, and emphasized the importance of revision. Sommers (1982) investigated the comments written on both the first and the second drafts, and included interviews with a representative sample of the instructors and students. In addition, all of the instructors commented on three of the students' sets of drafts.

As a means of establishing a reference point, one of the student essays was entered into the Writer's Workbench software, which made editorial changes. When the professor's comments were compared to the program's comments, the results revealed how "arbitrary and idiosyncratic most of [the] teachers' comments [were]. Besides, the calm, reasonable language of the computer provided quite a contrast to the hostility and mean-spiritedness of most of the teachers' comments" (Sommers, 1982, p. 149).

Sommers' (1982) first finding, appropriately named, "appropriation of the text" occurs when the instructor's comments "take students' attention away from their own purpose in writing a particular text and focus that attention on the teachers' purpose in commenting" (p. 149). For example, if an instructor corrects a few misspelled words and points out a problem with subject-verb agreement, and simultaneously makes a marginal comment asking the student to add more detail to the same sentence, then the instructor is addressing his or her own commenting standards rather than helping the student revise. Sommers (1982) asserted that the mixed message sent to the student with both comments about global issues and local issues encourages the student to see his or her draft as a final product that just needs to be edited according to the instructor's comments. The idea of revising is no longer about reorganizing, adding, deleting, or rethinking your purpose

in writing. When local comments are included on early drafts, students according to Sommers (1982), confuse revision with editing and fixing surface errors.

The second major finding from Sommers (1982) was that most of the instructors' comments were generic comments, lacking a specific referent to the student's text. The actual comments might as well have been "rubber stamps," which an instructor could use interchangeably on any text. Sommers (1982) suggests that comments like "vague," "be specific," or "choose precise language" do not help the student revise (p. 53). Sommers (1982) concluded that if composition instructors are truly to embrace the characteristics of a process based paradigm, they need to see feedback as also a process—not asking students to make corrections all at once, but to comment first on the content of the writing on one draft, allowing the student to return to the writing process to further reflect on his or her topic. Once the larger global issues have been addressed, then an instructor can begin to guide the student with the surface or form comments.

Each and every comment should strive to help a student develop his or her ability to revise. This should be done through thoughtful questions and statements that allow the student to see his or her essay through the eyes of a reader, and to internalize this feedback as a manner of developing better audience awareness skills in future assignments. Sommers' (1982) concluding remarks delineate the importance of this commenting style rather emphatically:

> Instead of finding errors or showing students how to patch up parts of their texts, we need to sabotage our students' conviction that the drafts they have written are complete and coherent. Our comments need to offer students revision tasks of a different order of complexity and sophistication from the ones that they identify, by forcing students back into the chaos, back to the point where they are shaping and restructuring their meaning (p. 154).

Brannon and Knoblauch (1982), using the same data as Sommers (1982), derived some additional conclusions. Their conclusions focused more on the role the instructor assumed when responding to student writing. Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) purported that as the 40 instructors prepared to write comments on student essays, they were immediately aware of their role as an evaluator, and, as a result, they approached the text not as a document that has academic merit, but as an attempt at academic discourse. Their attitude toward the process was hence tainted by their authoritative position. As a result, they are not really a reader in the traditional sense. They are not granting implied authority to the author as people normally do when reading a published work; they do not give the author the benefit of the doubt and work at understanding the author's prose.

Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) suggest that the instructors assumed the student author has little or no authority; furthermore, they held the student text accountable for adhering to some "Ideal Text," commenting on the text, editing it, changing it, appropriating it from the student's intention to the instructor's possession (p. 119). Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) argue that this action takes away not only the student's authority, but quite literally his or her authorial rights to the text as well.

In one example from the study, Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) had the instructors read a student text about the Lindbergh kidnapping trial. The instructors were told the student, John's, purpose was to assume the role of the prosecutor in the trial and present a closing argument. All of the instructors provided feedback directing the student toward each instructor's predetermined academic rhetorical style—the "Ideal Text." Not one of the instructors validated John's authority as the author of the text. Although each instructor, through their comments "appropriated the text," guiding John to conform,

Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) discovered an interesting difference between two distinct "Ideal Texts" identified. Both of the groups analyzed the student's text using Aristotelian rhetorical appeals of ethos (credibility of the author), logos (logical structure of argument), and pathos (emotional connection to an audience).

Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) found that some of the instructors, whom they labeled "conservatives," felt the student's writing was deficient because its use of emotionally charged words ("darling, little, innocent Lindbergh baby") invoked an appeal of pathos which was devoid of any appeal to logos, and therefore nonacademic. The other group of instructors were willing to overlook the lack of logos, suggesting the student intentionally used an appeal to pathos as a satire; however, they never assumed that John's rendition had any legitimate merit or authority; it must have been childish hyperbole. Both groups were surprised to learn that the appeal made by John was very similar to the pathos-based appeal used by the actual prosecutor.

From this example, Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) deduce that instructors should make an effort to consult the student about what s/he was trying to say before suggesting changes. The recommendation from Brannon and Knoblauch is that instructors need to acknowledge their potential control over the student text and then abandon that control and adopt a commenting style that discovers the student's intention and helps them match the discourse to that intention.

Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) suggest the best method for conveying any feedback is face to face. While student conferencing is very prominent in the current literature on feedback, they acknowledge what has continued to be the biggest obstacle to this practice gaining more popularity: time (Atwell, 1998; Barbier, 1997; Carnicelli,

1995; Coffin et al., 2003; Elbow, 1973; Evans, 1997; Ferris, 2003; Freedman, 1987; Freedman & Katz, 1987; Freedman & Sperling, 1985; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Hacker 1996; Newkirk, 1984; Prior, 1998; Rose, 1982; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Walker, 1987; Zamel, 1982, 1985).

Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) conclude the study asserting that the student-writer will be more motivated to write because s/he knows that there is a reader who will take his or her writing seriously They explain that with each draft submitted, the student not only improve his or her writing ability, but to devise better revising skills also. Brannon and Knoblauch note that this new focus on process and revision had its challenges as more instructors began using process assignments.

Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) acknowledge that the infrastructure of the American educational system is not in a paradigm shift and grades are, regardless of instructor's pedagogical approach, required in the end. As a last step in the multi-draft class, evaluation, grading should only take place after a student-writer has participated in peer editing, and s/he has received feedback from the instructor, after the student-writer has revised between each reader, and finally, after s/he decides the essay is ready. The researchers further encouraged educators to remove any notion of form and surface error correction from the evaluation process, suggesting that any discussion of form or format does not have any place in this type of class, as it is just a reminder of the "Ideal Text." This notion has also been endorsed in L2 research studies (Krashen, 1984; Zamel, 1985). The grade itself will be based on the student's improvement over the course at expressing his/her intentions, upon which time the student and instructor in one last conference will discuss what grade would be mutually acceptable.

The importance of these three studies to the teaching of writing and responding to essays is substantial; however, the inconsistencies in research reporting and the lack of empirical evidence is quite damaging to a contemporary audience's impression of these studies. At the time when the studies were reported, scant criticism surfaced about the collection of data and the assumptions made by the researchers. For example, Sommers (1982) does not explain how the computer program determined the instructor's comments were viewed as "hostile and mean-spirited" (p. 149). While an exclusion of any description of the program is damaging to the validity of the study, it was not enough to discredit the other findings.

The results of Knoblauch and Brannon (1981), Brannon and Knoblauch (1982), and Sommers (1982) introduced key areas of exploration in written feedback: the benefits of facilitative over directive comments, the dangers of appropriating the student's text, the impact of vague "rubber stamped" comments, comments on content before comments on form are beneficial, avoiding the "ideal text," the importance of contextualizing any study by including the student's background in the study, and the benefits of peer feedback and conferences.

Forms of Written Feedback

The forms of written feedback that have been investigated in studies over the past twenty years are vast, and attempting to cull generalized best practices from the results has proven to be quite complicated (Ferris, 2003; Fife & O' Neill, 2001). This section of the literature review focuses on studies investigating the strengths and weaknesses of specific methods for providing written feedback to L1 and L2 students.

The first subsection addresses some of the more holistic commenting concerns in both L1 and L2 literature such as minimal grading (Elbow,1998; Haswell, 1987) and some of the theories about using marginal comments and end comments (Smith, 1997). The second sub section will address the L1 and L2 research about whether facilitative or directive comments are more beneficial in motivating student revision. The methodology used in both L1 and L2 studies of facilitative and directive comment investigations will be a focal point in this discussion. The final sub section addresses what L1 and L2 research reveals about instructor attitudes and expectations in regards to providing written feedback on student essays. In particular, studies that have investigated classes with both L1 and L2 students in the same class are explored.

General Written Feedback Strategies

The research about the use of written feedback on student essays is quite voluminous, and as this literature has amassed, "an entire vocabulary for talking about teacher response has developed…" (Ferris, 2003, p. 2). Terms such as Sommers' (1982) "Rubber stamping" as an explanation of the ineffectiveness of writing trite, vague fragmented statements (i.e. good, nice job, awk, reword, recast, ?) has guided instructors to focus on providing more detailed, content specific comments. The use of the phrase "appropriating the text" to suggest how an overly directive manner of commenting can alienate a student from his or her writing, placing authorship of the text in the hands of the instructor. As these terms became more canonical in the research, researchers started designing, conducting, and publishing studies, supporting, rejecting, adjusting, redirecting, criticizing, adapting, and honing strategies for providing comments that are

more conscious of the student as the recipient of the comments (Berlin, 1993; Herrington, 1997; White, 1994).

Suggestions from Practitioners

In general, the studies in this section were concerned with the effectiveness of a comment on improving the student's writing skills. The effectiveness of the comment was determined in the methodology of the studies in this section based on whether a correction, addition, or deletion appeared in the student's next draft. The studies discussed in this section primarily discuss the general approaches to the entire process of commenting. Concerns about the amount of comments on an essay, the timing of the comments in the writing process, and the placement of the comment on the student essay have provided some relatively stable practices for instructors.

Researchers investigated whether commenting extensively is better than minimal commenting (Haswell, 1983; Elbow, 1984); whether including a grade on early drafts was better than leaving the grade off until the final drafts were collected (Burkland & Grimm, 1983; Young, 1997); whether the comments on early drafts should focus on global writing concerns (organization, content) and leave local (grammar, punctuation) comments to later drafts (Beach, 1979); whether the comments are handwritten, typed, and recorded on audio (Anson, 1997, 1999; Clark, 1981; Farnsworth, 1974; Johanson, 1999; Mellen & Sommers, 2003; Sommers, 1989; Yarbro & Angevine, 1982); whether marginal comments are better than end comments (Danis, 1987; Emig, 1971; Fife & O'Neill, 2001; Leki, 1990; Muncie, 2000; Smith, 1997) whether attaching a rubric to the essay is better than writing on the student's essay (Bartholomae, 1986; White, 1994); or whether one linguistic syntax (imperatives, suggestions, questions, praise, criticism) is

better than the others (Brice, 1995; Ferris, 1995, 1996, 2003; Straub, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000). From these studies the most complex and controversial concerns for both L1 and L2 research are evident in three of the general strategies: minimal marking, global comments before local comments; and end comments and marginal comments.

Minimal Marking

Anyone who has commented on a student's essay has probably agonized about how time consuming the process is. Many instructors want to comment on every error, explain every problem with content, discuss all the good points of an idea, and provide thoughtful suggestions for the next draft. One of the questions asked by Haswell (1983) is whether students would benefit more from fewer but more detailed comments. Haswell (1983) argued that the practice of commenting in detail on issues of correctness on a student essay is essentially useless because the student's writing does not improve as a result of these comments. He supports the practice of identifying the problem by using check marks in the margins to indicate to the student that there is a problem in that line. He argues that a student will benefit more from having his or her attention drawn to a problem where s/he may have the opportunity to correct the error on his or her own, and provides the instructor with more time to comment on content issues.

This initial call to reduce the number of comments on essays is apparent in both L1 and L2 research. In L1 research, several studies focus on the importance of written feedback and have noted reducing the number of comments on a student's essay as one of the most important factors to increasing the efficacy of the comments (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Haswell, 1983; Hodges, 1997; Lunsford, 1997; Moxley, 1989; Smith & Dunston, 1998; Sommers, 1982; Straub & Lunsford, 1995; Yancey, 2000). Although

these studies have suggested that decreasing the number and increasing the length and detail of specific comments is beneficial, the manner in which the efficacy of a comment has been determined in these studies is by monitoring whether the student applies the comment to the next draft, and not necessarily investigating whether the student understands why a change should be made. As a result of this singular view of efficacy, a number of conclusions have been drawn which may have been accurate for that study, but they lack a method to check for comprehension from the students themselves. For example, several of the L1 studies stress in particular that comments dealing with grammar and other issues of correctness are the least effective for students and the number of these comments should be reduced (Hodges, 1997; Lunsford, 1997; Straub & Lunsford, 1995).

As might be expected of researchers whose educational training has been heavily influenced by linguistics, many L2 researchers were not as quick to embrace the practice of reducing the number of grammar and correctness comments (Horowitz, 1986; Silva, 1988, 1993, 1997). There are, however, advocates in the literature who do suggest the benefits of reducing the number of comments on students essays in L2 research (Ashwell, 2000; Fathman & Walley, 1990; Ferris, 2003; Truscott, 1996, 1999; Zamel, 1982, 1983, 1985). Many of the reasons supplied for this disagreement in L2 research focused on the lack of any research in an L2 environment that supports the conclusions from L1 research on this matter (Raimes, 1985; Silva, 1985, 1988). The skepticism about the applicability of L1 theories in L2 instruction was not isolated to this one principle; similar arguments appeared in the discussions of when an instructor should comment in the writing process (Ferris, 2003; Silva, 1993).

Ordering Comments: Global/Content before Local/Form

One of the more complex aspects of commenting to enter into the research in both L1 and L2 studies had its origins in the movement from the product to process paradigm of teaching writing. As researchers began to create more assignments requiring students to submit work in various stages of the writing process, questions surfaced about when, how much, and what style of comments an instructor should employ on student writing.

Using Sommers' (1982) suggestion to avoid combining comments on content issues and grammar issues on the same draft, researchers are still investigating different strategies of commenting on early drafts as opposed to late drafts. In L1 research, researchers continue to practice this strategy, giving two explanations why content comments should be used on early drafts and form comments should only appear on later drafts (Hairston, 1984; Moxley, 1986).

In L2, research Ashwell (2000) investigated if the process of commenting on content on early drafts and form comments on later drafts results in student improvement. The study followed foreign language students at a junior college in Japan through a three-draft essay. Ashwell (2000) divided fifty students into four different groups. Each group received content or form feedback in a different pattern on each draft (Group 1: Content Draft 1, Form Draft 2; Group 2: Form Draft 1, Content on Draft 2; Group 3: Form and Content on Draft 1, Form and Content on Draft 2; and Group 4: [control group], no feedback).

Raters were trained on the use of the two rating scales on formal accuracy and content score. All groups showed improvement from Draft 1 to Draft 3, but the results of the study suggested that Group 3 showed the most improvement overall. Group 1 and

Group 2 showed slight improvement and Group 4 remained the same and in some cases, ratings went down. Overall, the participants in the study showed the greatest level of improvement with comments on form and little improvement on content.

End Comments (versus, and, or) Marginal Comments

The physical placement of a comment on a student's essay is surprisingly an area in the literature where few studies have investigated, especially in L2 research (Ferris, 2003). The placement of comments has primarily fallen into two categories that could either be used in tandem or separately—end comments and marginal comments. End comments and marginal comments have, however, been discussed in numerous studies in both L1 and L2 research (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Danis, 1987; Emig, 1971; Fife & O'Neill, 2001; Leki, 1990; Muncie, 2000; Smith, 1997; Sommers, 1982).

Marginal comments usually take the form of brief text specific statements, questions, and corrections. The comments often contain in-text corrections where words are crossed out, words are added, grammar is corrected, punctuation either inserted or removed, words underlined or boxed, editorial marks inserted, lines or arrows drawn from the specific text in question to the margins where the instructor provides an explanation, use of check marks in the margins identifying stylistic errors, or giving praise. In addition, statements, commands, requests, suggestions, and questions can also be posed in the margins with lines or arrows drawn to the specific aspects of the text.

Both Sommers (1982) and Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) define the state of written response theory as being too dependent upon marginal comments. Sommers (1982) and Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) assert that these comments typically are too authoritative, in that they take the ownership of the student text away from the student.

Smith's (1997) "The genre of the end comment: Conventions in instructor responses in student writing," presents an excellent explanation of how the demanding, time-consuming practice of writing end comments on student essays compares to the Bakhtinian principle of primary and secondary speech genre theory. Smith contends that from the beginning of an instructor's career the content, style, and structure of an instructor's end comments begin to take on similar patterns. These patterns are informed by the complex situational context between the instructor and the student, instructor and the institution, and student and the institution. Smith suggests that the instructor, over time, creates and reuses a general commenting strategy which meets the needs of a specific situation—a speech genre.

Typically, the end comment was explored from the vantage point of its effectiveness in communicating revision tactics to the student (Ashwell, 2000; Lunsford, 1997; Straub & Lunsford, 1995). Smith's (1997) approach to the end comment as a speech genre was an attempt to identify if there were common trends employed by commenters in how they constructed the content, style, and structure of an end comment.

Using Bakhtin's (1986) notion of the primary and secondary speech genres, Smith (1997) argues that end comments are what Bakhtin (1986) calls secondary speech genres. Secondary speech genres are complex socially and contextually moored patterns of communication that have been established as a result of the repetition of less formal primary speech genres which, over time, are "altered and assume a special character when they enter into complex [speech genres]" (p. 62). Her study then investigates the content, style, and structure of primary speech genres of individual instructors looking for

examples of how these may have been altered and absorbed by the secondary speech genre of end comments across the country.

Smith's (1997) creative content analysis driven study of end comments gathered data from a total of 313 randomly collected end comments from two sources: 208 comments from ten Freshmen writing teaching assistants from Penn State in 1993, and 105 end comments written on student essays from Connors and Lunsford's (1988) national study of student error. From both samples, she removed essays that did not have end comments, and randomly selected a representative group of essays reflecting an equal number of essays receiving A's, B's, C's, D's, and F's from both samples. The remaining 313 comments represented end comments from across all grades, and from various individuals at different universities representing every region in the United States.

Smith (1997) identified sixteen primary genres, which she divided into three groups: eleven judging genre comments, two reader-response genre comments, and three coaching genre comments. The eleven judging genre comments are evaluations of development, style, entire essay, focus, effort, organization, rhetorical effectiveness, topic, correctness, audience accommodation, and justification of the grade. The reader response genres included comments identifying reading experience (instructors' thoughts as they read the essay) and identification (instructors' direct personal response to student's experiences). The three coaching genre comments are suggestions for revision of current essays, suggestions for future essays, and offers of assistance.

Smith (1997) further divides the judging genre comments by classifying each one as having either a positive or a negative message. She presents the percent of positive and negative comments by each of the eleven judging genre types as evidence of the typical

use of the comment type in the primary genre of judging. For example, Smith notes that 83% of the "evaluations of the entire paper are positive, despite the even distribution of grades across the sample" (p. 253). Smith then explains this information suggesting that, "[t]eachers may be reluctant to write negative evaluations of an entire essay because they feel such statements would simply indicate global failure rather than pinpointing failings which can be corrected, or because they realize sweeping negativity could destroy a student's relatively fragile self-confidence" (p. 253). Based on her findings, there is a pattern of positive and negative usage of these eleven judging genre comments.

Smith (1997) further demonstrates the stability of the genre through an analysis of the individual comments use of particular grammatical structures based on the negative or positive nature of the comment. For example, she notes that for "positive evaluations of focus, organization, development, the student's effort, audience accommodation, and topic, the Penn State instructors used 'you' (meaning the student) as subject 58% of the time" but when instructors wrote negative comments in these genres, "the teachers conform to 'the paper' convention 63% of the time" (p. 256). The identification of these patterns certainly suggests that there are relatively stable content, style and structure comments in the primary speech genre of the end comment. At the very least, Smith's (1997) study presents enough information to warrant further investigations into the genre identification of written response strategies.

The second part of Smith's (1997) study sought to find the patterns of these primary genres as they appear in the secondary genre of the entire end comment. Smith looks at the patterns of these primary genres as they were placed in the paragraph, 88% of the end comments beginning with a positive evaluation comment from the primary genre,

noting that negative evaluation comments rarely appear at the beginning of the end comment. Her explanation for this pattern primarily rested on the notion that after years of teaching and commenting, instructors followed a kind of unspoken genre for the placement of comments in an end comment. Smith warns that this adherence to generic forms may have a negative effect on how students view comments. She suggests that students may identify the patterns from their previous experiences and see that pattern as formulaic and in genuine. Very much like Sommers (1982) warning about "rubberstamping," the comments in the genre of the end comment run the risk of becoming decontextualized and benign. Smith ends the essay calling for instructors to pay attention to the practice of commenting and to take careful measures to stay contextualized in the student's essay.

Smith's (1997) conclusions from her study are rational under the stated purpose for her investigation; however, one limitation to the study is the context of the student's interpretation of the comment. She derives these patterns from the data and then categorizes the comments into positive and negative categories without addressing the criteria for making such a distinction. What makes a comment positive or negative to an instructor well versed in the practice of writing comments on a student's essay may be similar to what makes a positive and negative comment to a student. However, as other researchers have noted, the manner in which instructors think a comment will be interpreted are not always in line with the interpretation supplied by the student (Sperling & Freedman, 1987). An area that now demands more concentration is the complex contextualized process that students use to decipher meaning from instructor's written commentary. The studies which attempted to categorize the types of comments known as

facilitative and directive made headway toward the inclusion of the student's interpretation of commentary through its attention to the focus and mode of the comment.

Facilitative Versus Directive Written Comments

Investigations monitoring the linguistic category of the comments have looked at the efficacy of feedback as questions, statements, imperatives, hedges, corrections, corrections with rule explanation, or simply identifying the problem with no accompanying feedback. In general, the areas receiving a significant amount of attention in the literature are studies investigating the relationship between the structure of the comment and its effectiveness. Straub (1996, 1997, 1999, 2000) classifies these investigations into the modes of commentary: facilitative or directive comments. The focus on these issues has been well represented in the literature of L1 and L2 research for nearly twenty-five years of philosophical, empirical, and pedagogical inquiries into why and how instructors "facilitatively" respond to students' writing (Anson, 1989; 1999; Ashwell, 2000; Bardine, 1999; Bardine, Bardine, & Deegan, 2000; Bates et. al, 1993; Beason, 1993; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1984; Ferris, 1995; Krapels, 1990; Latham, 1999; Moxley, 1992; Ransdell, 1999; Straub, 1996, 1997, 1999; Straub & Lunsford, 1995; Weaver, 1998; White, 1994; Wiggins, 1997).

Straub (1996) attributes these general categories to the work of Sommers (1982) and Brannon and Knoblauch (1982). Straub suggests that research in this subfield has, as a result, splintered into two basic directions: research focused on determining when and what type of comments are the most beneficial, and how to avoid making comments that appropriate (take over) the writing of the students.

The elusive question that has taunted the literature for almost a quarter of a century is which comments are considered facilitative and which are directive. Researchers have proposed that facilitative comments offer praise, ask questions, guide revision, explain rules of grammar and style, and suggest additional sources (Brice, 1995; Danis, 1987; McGee, 1999; Straub & Lunsford, 1995).

Facilitative and Directive Comments in L1

One of the most thorough and ambitious investigations into facilitative and directive controversy in the L1 field of response to writing was Straub and Lunsford's (1995), *Twelve Readers Reading: Responding to College Student Writing*. Straub (1996, 1997) followed the initial study with two additional studies using the same material gathered in the first response to analyze different aspects of the types of comments, and how students interpret those comments.

The purpose of Straub and Lunsford's (1995) investigation was to survey what types of comments twelve instructors and leaders in composition theory used to practice their craft on first-year compositions. They wanted to investigate the commenting strategies as a way to get an idea of the current state of response theory, and to provide this information in book form for instructors of composition. Straub and Lunsford's study enlisted the expertise of twelve recognized and well-published composition instructors to comment on the same twelve essays collected by the researchers as a represented sampling of the types of writing created in first year composition courses. The essays had different writing prompts and guidelines, and, in order to guide their comments, each instructor was given a hypothetical context in which the essay was written. The hypothetical situation included the assignment, draft stage, the submission time in the

course, a brief synopsis of topics covered in the class and, in most cases, a statement about the student author.

Over 3,500 comments on the sets of essays were catalogued according to their focus and comment mode. Comments were placed into two categories: global and local or, as Sommers (1982) categorized, content and form. Unlike Sommers (1982), Straub and Lunsford (1995) made further distinctions in each focus: Global included comments on ideas, development, and global structure; local included corrections, evaluations, qualified negative evaluations, imperatives, advice, praise, indirect requests, problem-posing questions, heuristic questions, and reflective statements.

The next qualitative aspect of the study went beyond Knoblauch and Brannon's (1981; 1982) directive and facilitative category for instructors, and used personal statements from the twelve composition scholars, supporting evidence gathered in the first stage of the study to present a spectrum of response styles: authoritarian, directive, advisory, Socratic, dialectic, and analytical (Straub & Lunsford, 1996). The information gathered demonstrated that in the traditionally accepted terms global and local, as categories of comments, and directive and facilitative for response styles were limited. By further classification, information that is more beneficial can be gathered to help explain some of the previous literature's inconsistencies.

As an investigative study, Straub and Lunsford (1995) has opened up many different ways to think about the complexity of commenting, and the ability to see so many different response styles to the same piece of writing provides a plethora of strategies and philosophies for the experienced and the inexperienced writing instructor. Straub and Lunsford's study is not without limitations, the largest being the artificiality of

the commenting situation. However, since the results were just used to demonstrate the techniques of response, and did not make any evaluative assumptions about some comments being better than others, this aspect of artificiality is not serious. It will provide researchers with many new focuses and modes of response to explore in classroom research; in fact, Straub (1996) explored it himself the next year.

Straub (1996) took up the issue of instructor control in commenting styles. He examined the response strategies of four of the responders on one of the sets of student essays from Straub and Lunsford (1995), and explored the different response styles in direct correlation to the focus and mode of the comments in an effort to provide more substantive examples, and clearer distinctions, between different comments and respective responders. The four responders covered the entire spectrum from authoritative to interactive. The results of this analysis suggested, contrary to Sommers' (1982), Brannon, and Knoblauch's (1982) theories that a comment can be written in a non-appropriative manner. Straub (1996) found that any type of comment made on a student text involves some level of the instructor appropriating and taking control of the student text.

The distinction was that earlier research had viewed "appropriating the text" as binary opposites and not as having degrees of instructor control. The goal of Straub's (1996) study is also to analyze comments associated with various positions along the authoritative-interactive spectrum, and to look at the comments' textual features to try to better understand why they are representative of that classification. The study opens a discussion about, for example, a non-authoritarian use of imperatives, which have typically been demonized by the literature as one of the most authoritarian modes of

response, completely alienating the student from the essay and mooring the instructor firmly as the author. By analyzing the texts from his four responders, Straub (1996) presents a case for investigating if an authoritative responder can, utilizing a range of modes, still be an effective responder, motivating a student to revise, and challenging them to enter revision. This is, in Sommers' (1982) words, open to "why new choices would positively change their texts and thus to show them the potential for development implicit in their own writing" (p. 156).

Straub (1996) analyzed each set of responses, identifying the foci and modes, and acknowledging that these comments are taken outside of a real classroom context. At the same time, he questioned if the structure, voice, and content of individual comments, as well as collective modes of comments, "can create an image of the teacher, implicitly establish some relationship with the student, and exert varying degrees of control over the student's writing choices" (Straub, 1996, p. 238). In his study, he admits that the way the comments are framed on a page has a direct connection to the comment's meaning, and that the terms used would, in fact, be related to a social relationship between the student and the instructor. He acknowledges that he is just analyzing the text at a certain moment in time and that it has been removed from a complex educational context in which the actual or intended meaning would most likely be much more difficult to ascertain.

Straub (1996) explains that he is not attempting to identify the intention of the instructor's comment written in the larger context of a classroom as he points out that such an interpretation can only take place at that moment. For the same reason, he asserts that he is also not trying to derive how the student would understand the comment. His

analysis, therefore, has merit as a means of demonstrating how any mode (correction, praise, advice, etc.) of comment can have a range; it is not locked in.

Straub (1996) concludes his remarks pointing out that contrary to what most of the literature has reported there are not just two modes of response. He suggests that the study of the spectrum of modes has primarily demonstrated that instructors should not look at all directive modes as potentially destructive to student motivation and hindering a student writer's development. Teachers need to be aware that there are a number of different ways to facilitate, direct, and evaluate at the same time. He suggests that with this new information instructors can approach response, appreciating its adaptability, and find new ways to comment, which are not rigidly categorized as just facilitative or directive, allowing the instructor's commenting persona to develop through the interaction with the student in the text as well as in the classroom.

The conclusions of this study present examples for instructors to use as a method of exploring personal response styles that are less controlling than the prescriptive nature of previous approaches (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Sommers, 1982). Straub (1997) once again takes his twelve readers into another investigation; however, this time he focuses on the complex relationship between students' reaction to response and the mode of response from instructors. In Straub's exploratory study, he asks 142 first-year college writing students to complete a 40-item questionnaire investigating student perceptions of three types of instructors' comments, which he categorizes as focus, specificity, and mode.

The focus of comments has had a prescribed formula since Sommers'(1982) proclamation that just as writing is a process, so must instructors' responses emulate that

process, saving instructor comments on local issues of grammar and other surface level problems until relatively late in the writing process. Early interactions with student texts should be catered toward encouraging revision on the global level. The rationale behind the theory is that students associate local corrections with a finished product and regardless of any other comments of a global nature, students would not enter into revision with the motivation to engage in some of the more reflective and introspective aspects of revision. Straub (1997), reviewing the largely inconclusive literature on content (global) feedback over form (local) feedback, observed that the studies do not reflect one unifying front advocating or denouncing either side of the debate, setting the stage for his survey research into student perception of comments (Ashwell, 2000; Ferris, 2003; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996).

The specificity of comments, while not experiencing a great deal of dedicated research to the student's reaction to specific comments, it has been generally reinforced that students prefer more detailed, specific feedback that gives them a revision plan, provided that the comment is respectful and understandable. Following a similar notion of helpfulness, the literature suggests that comments of mode are well received with the caveat that the comment, regardless of how critical and/or evaluative, is helpful as long as the instructor's comment explains what the problem is, and ideally provides the student with an opportunity to revise. The research has focused more on the two extremes of praise and criticism.

The main problem with the literature noted by Straub (1997) focuses primarily on the semantics of the terms used to describe mode. Straub identified two significant

methodological flaws among the current research investigating the mode. Are students providing the same or a similar definition of the term being used by the researchers?

The participants in the survey were instructed to read a student-written essay. Before each instructor began, s/he was informed, “that the paper is rough and that you are going to need to do substantial revision” (Straub, 1997, p. 97). As a means of investigating the rationale for students’ reaction to comments, students were asked to provide more elaborate explanations for the responses to ten of the forty items on the questionnaire. Thirty-four of the 40 instructor comments selected dealt with global matters of content, and six dealt with local revision. Using the categories established in Straub and Lunsford’s (1996) investigation, fifteen comments were presented in strong authoritative modes. Straub (1997) was interested in learning to what degree the participants preferred comments in different modes, and how much of this preference did the students attribute, both consciously and intuitively, to the different modes and the implicit degree of control.

In particular, this initial study was limited in the sense that it completely avoided the concept that instructors, regardless of how hard they try, do bring their experience with the student and the class into the response and evaluation of each student’s essay. To be fair to the researchers, this was intentional as they determined that it would be far more compromising to ask each of the twelve instructors to pretend that they were responding to a student in one of their classes. They may not ever give an assignment like this, or they may be working with a completely different population of students.

Facilitative and Directive Feedback in L2 Research

There has not been a tremendous amount of research done with the forms of the comments in L2 research. In addition, the studies that have addressed the use of questions, commands, hedges, statements, etc, have derived conflicting conclusions about the relevance of this data. Ferris (2003) also calls for more study into the following:

> student processing of instructor feedback in question form (especially indirect questioning), the use of rhetorical or grammatical jargon or terminology, the length or brevity of the written comments, the effects of instructor hedging (which may either confuse an L2 student writer because of lack of pragmatic awareness or communicate that the instructor is not really serious about the comment because it was not strongly stated), and the pairing of statements or questions about the text with explicit suggestions for revision. (p. 35)

Students' Reactions to Written Feedback

> There can be no such thing as an isolated utterance. It always presupposes utterances that precede and follow it. No one utterance can be either the first or the last. Each is only a link in a chain, and none can be studied outside this chain. (Bakhtin, 1986 p. 136)

The various research studies that have discussed which commenting style is most beneficial to students have been lacking in one major area for quite some time: students' reactions to comments. Only a smattering of studies have employed tactics asking students to identify their reaction to certain comments (Bardine, 1999; Bardine, Bardine, & Deegan, 2000; Brice, 1995, 1999; Edgington, 2004; Evans, 1997; Ferris, 1995, 1997, 2003; Gay, 1998; Ketter & Hunter, 1997; Krol, 1998; McGee, 1999; Shen, 1998; Straub, 1997). Of these, several, including Straub (1997), were not contextualized to the student's own work or classroom.

This section of the literature review will discuss a few of the studies conducted in both L1 and L2 environments which focused on student reactions based on the method of commenting utilized in the study. The second sub section will investigate what method of investigation was used to gather information. The third section will investigate the almost

complete lack of attention to students' reactions to comments in the context of a L1 and L2 class at the community college level.

L1 Student Reaction to Written Feedback

In L1 research, investigations into students' reaction to feedback have addressed what types of comments students like and dislike. Students like detailed comments on both content and grammar issues provided that the comments include explicit revision tactics (Ziv, 1984). Vague comments, jargon (frag, cs, trans.), or comments utilizing editorial symbols, were disliked by students (Bardine, 1999; Bardine, Bardine, & Deegan, 2000; Hayes & Daiker, 1984; Dohrer, 1991). Studies in L1 have also investigated students' reactions to both criticism and praise with mixed results. Some studies have found that students like comments praising the student's writing (Beach, 1989; Daiker, 1989; Hayes & Daiker, 1984). On the other hand, Burkland and Grimm (1986) and other researchers noted that some students liked the praise, but did not see how the praise helped them in the revision process (Bardine, 1999; Bardine, Bardine, & Deegan, 2000). In general, research on how students react to written feedback has focused on what the student's reaction was, and not the more complex issue of why s/he has reacted in such a manner, or how the context surrounding the student, instructor, and the class may contribute to the students' reaction.

A few studies have investigated the reasons behind students' interpretations of instructor written feedback. In particular, McGee's (1999) dissertation explored the complexity of interpreting students' reactions to written comments through a detailed qualitative study. McGee was particularly interested in how students read and use instructor commentary. McGee's research questions investigated students' affective

responses to instructor-written comments and what accounts for those responses, how students interpret instructor-written comments as they revise, which types of comments students describe as being silencing or developing, and how does the larger classroom context, student-instructor relationship, and student attitude toward the course affect students' interpretations of the instructor's written comments.

Five students enrolled in the second, first-year writing course in a two-course sequence. Participant selection required that the student successfully complete the first semester course, currently be enrolled in the second course, have time to participate, and express interest in participating. The students were selected based on the previous writing instructor's evaluation of the student's revision classification as high, mid-level, or low revisers as defined by the researcher. The participants were all enrolled in different second semester writing classes with different instructors. While all instructors were informed of the study and given the opportunity to refuse participation, the instructors did not know which students were participating in the study.

Data were collected using retrospective discourse-based interviews with students as each student engaged with the comments; recorded oral revision logs recorded at the students home, written revision log, and textual analysis. Data collection procedures were collected for two essays from each participant in the course, but not revisions of the same essay.

Before the participants began revising, each completed a revision checklist based on the work of Brand (1989) which asked students to rank various emotional levels after reading through the instructor-written comments from one (low) to five (high). Combining this information with some of the responses to the retrospective discourse-

based interview questions, McGee (1999) was able to categorize student's emotional reaction to instructor's-written comments. For the textual comments, the coding schema used by Straub and Lunsford (1996) was used to classify instructor-written commentary on students' essays into two general groups: focus and mode. The interviews and revision logs were analyzed through pattern coding.

McGee (1999) reported medium to low affective response to instructor-written comments, registering a 2.8 out of 5.0 as the highest emotional response. When considering some of the contextual aspects of the comments, however, some interesting patterns emerged from the data analysis. In the interviews, when students were asked to explain the reason why instructors comment on student essays, three reasons were identified: grade justification, comments were to help students improve writing or the particular essay in question, and comments were to help students determine what a particular instructor wants in a essay.

All of the participants looked at the grade on the essay before reading any of the comments, and while the emotional reactions were never extremely high, the level of frustration, anger, and anxiety correlated with the student's actual grade in connection to the grade each felt s/he earned. McGee (1999) explained this finding as an example of how students view the entire concept of commenting as grade justification more than comments designed to help the students improve as a writer. In addition, each of the students identified how they felt about the instructor to be of little relevance to how they react to the comments. However, a few of the participants stated in the interviews that whether they liked or disliked the instructor did influence how valuable the comments were to the student.

One significant impact on how the participants reacted negatively to the comments stemmed from how they did not understand how the comments connected to the course and specific assignment goals. The comments that the participants found to be more helpful were reader-centered questions framed as either suggestions, directions, or questions. However, comments that were vague, unclear, or attempted to detour students writing to the instructor's way of thinking were interpreted as negative by the respondents and discouraged them from revising.

As McGee (1999) noted, several of the students had negative impressions of the instructor, stating that s/he was opinionated and in one case, the participant called the comments "combative" (p. 87). The area that has not been adequately addressed in this study, and in others, is why the comment is interpreted as combative. In this particular study, McGee does not investigate how the student derives this interpretation, and given that McGee's study was not designed to interview the instructor, she could not account for the intended meaning of the instructor-written comment. Similarly, McGee points to comments that are reader-centered as eliciting a positive reaction from students, but without confirmation that the instructor intended the written comment to be read as reader-centered, why a comment was interpreted as being reader-centered could not be investigated. The context of the instructor's intention, as described by him or her or as communicated in the classroom context, cannot be accounted for in McGee.

Edgington (2004) began to investigate some of the students' explanations of why certain comments are better than others in a study conducted at a four-year college. Edgington reported the results of a case study of six students' reactions to three styles of commenting. Edgington used marginal comments on one essay, a personal letter/end

comments on a second essay, and one-on-one conferences on a third. Edgington used a questionnaire in which each student offered his or her reaction to and suggestions for each of the commenting styles.

All of the students reported an affinity for commenting styles that allowed for more elaborate and detailed responses, ranking conferences as the best, personal letter/end comment next and marginal comments last. Students also reported that of the three styles, they felt that the personal letter/end comment demonstrated the highest level of instructor involvement with the students' writing. They felt that the letter showed more thoughtful reflection and effort than conferencing and significantly more effort than marginal notes. In addition, students reported that the highest level of confusion was apparent because of the marginal comments. Students stated that these comments were often fragments, vague statements, and randomly placed surrounding the text.

While the results of Edgington's (2004) study added some important findings to the field, the size of the study and the limitations of an instructor-researcher project of this nature open the findings to some significant criticism.

L2 Student Reaction to Written Feedback

Research in L2 student reaction to written feedback has focused primarily, like the L1 research, on what types of comments students liked and disliked. In most of the studies, the primary data collection method was a survey conducted after the students had received feedback (Arndt, 1993; Brice, 1995; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Ferris, 1995; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994, 1996; McCurdy, 1992). In all of these studies, students reported being very appreciative of written feedback and that they found most comments to be helpful. L2 students disliked comments in the form of editorial symbols (Brice,

1995). In many of the studies students reported positive reactions to comments dealing with grammar and style (Ferris, 1995; McCurdy, 1992; Radecki & Swales, 1988). L2 students reported occasional anger and confusion with comments posed as questions (Ferris, 1995, 1997, 2001). The problem with most of these studies is that the conclusions drawn are based almost exclusively on survey results (Arndt, 1993; Brice, 1995; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Ferris, 1995; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994, 1996; McCurdy, 1992). With the exception of Brice (1995), these studies failed to cross-reference the data with the context of the classroom and the actual texts.

Brice (1995) conducted a case study of ESL students' reactions to written feedback. Brice designed a study to investigate three ESL students' immediate reactions to instructor feedback at Purdue University. The course was a special English course designed specifically for ESL students. Her study focused on three research questions:

1. What kinds of teacher-written feedback do students understand and what kinds do they have trouble understanding?
2. What kinds of teacher-written feedback do students like best and least on their drafts?
3. What kinds of teacher-written feedback do students find most and least useful in helping them to revise drafts and write future essays? (p.2)

Brice (1995) collected data in four forms: videotaped think-aloud protocols, textual analysis, interviews, and a take home questionnaire asking students for information on the importance of various types of written feedback.

Brice (1995) coded the instructor's comments according to implicit and explicit cues. Both implicit and explicit cues were further broken down by macro (content and

organization) and micro (grammar, vocabulary, and usage) level concerns. Explicit cues were identified as comments giving a direct suggestion for revision and included adding information, deleting, or providing express written instructions for revision. Implicit cues were identified as instances where the instructor underlines or circles part of the text but does not provide detailed explanations or suggestions for revision.

Brice (1995) analyzed videotaped think-aloud protocols of students reactions to written feedback on the second and then the final drafts of essays, using an impressionistic analysis of the transcribed protocols. The impressionistic analysis of the transcription involved classifying each comment into a three point Likert scale addressing her three research questions: degree to which student understands comment, degree to which student likes comment, degree to which student agrees with comment. Brice (1995) also coded the student's behavior as s/he read each comment noting both linguistic and extra linguistic reactions to each comment. The textual data, protocol data, interview responses, and responses to the questionnaires were analyzed together, providing an overall reaction to the commenting process.

The results of Brice's (1995) study revealed that students are diligent in their reading of instructor's comments. Each of her participants read the comments and utilized the feedback in the revision process; however, in several instances Brice (1995) notes that the student's interpretation of the comment is not clearly understood by the student. In general, implicit comments on both macro and micro level content were much more difficult for all three of the participants to understand. The level at which the students appreciated the comments correlated to the level at which the students understood the comment and were able to utilize the comment as s/he revised the essay.

Brice's (1995) study has to be commended for its unique approach to understanding the process L2 students engage in as they read an instructor's feedback. Utilizing think-aloud protocols in connection with interviews, textual analysis, and responses on questionnaires allowed a more contextualized view of written feedback into the field of response theory.

As Brice (1995) notes in her conclusion, future studies would benefit from further contextualization of information by interviewing the instructor as to his or her thoughts and attitudes towards commenting. In addition, one of the categories which Brice recognizes but does not include in her analysis is the importance of what she classifies as extra-linguistic responses (laughter, sighs, etc) during the think-aloud protocols. Although these responses were not catalogued, Brice mentioned students' sighs, grunts, laughs, and other extra-linguistic features, yet she does not relate these responses to the larger context, nor does she use these responses as indicators of some level of understanding and/or appreciation for a comment. Did the instructor intend for a comment to elicit a laugh? If not then what does the laugh indicate, if anything, about the student's attitude towards the comment, the instructor, the essay, the class, and writing in general?

Power Relationships between Students and Instructors

> The exceptional role of tone. The world of abuse and praise (and their derivatives: flattery, toadying, hypocrisy, humiliation, boorishness, caustic remarks, insinuations, and so forth). The almost objectless world that reflects the interrelations of speakers (their sequence according to importance, their hierarchy, and so forth). The least-studied aspect of speech life. This is not the world of tropes, but the world of personal tones and nuances, and it consists not in the relations among things (phenomena, concepts), but in the world of others' personalities. The tone is determined not by the referential content of the utterance and not by the experiences of the speaker, but by the relationship of the

> speaker to the individual personality of the other speaker to his [or her] rank, his [or her] importance, and so forth). (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 154)

The world of others' personalities mentioned by Bakhtin (1986) is the contextual framework that has been missing from response theories on instructor written feedback. Investigations into instructor written response from the perspectives of the instructor and the student have not taken into account the complexity of the relationship established through the classroom, nor has it accounted for the intricate and influential background of both the instructor and the student leading up to the first day of class.

Fife and O'Neill (2001) address the lack of research connecting the feedback to the actual practices promoted in the classroom. Fife and O'Neill presented an exhaustive literature review tracing current response studies back to the Sommers (1982) and Brannon and Knoblauch's (1982) oft cited conclusions—comments need to be specific and avoid the dreaded decontextualized "rubber-stamp" comment (Sommers, 1982) and the danger of appropriating student's texts, devaluing student authorship of the essay (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982). These conclusions have been embraced and well studied.

However, Fife and O'Neill (2001) note that in the scuffle to investigate Sommers (1982) and Brannon and Knoblauch's (1982) rubberstamping and appropriating the text theories, virtually no research has developed from two of the other major conclusions: "The key to successful commenting is to have what is said in the comments and what is done in the classroom mutually reinforce and enrich each other" (Sommers, 1982, p. 155) and Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) complement this suggestion with their call to encourage students to include marginal comments of their own explaining, " what they were trying to say or do and how they expected the reader to react" (p. 163).

From the early stages of response research in the early eighties, these two calls for adopting practices that contextualize comments to the instructor-student relationship in the context of the larger classroom have been virtually unexplored. Fife and O'Neill (2001) mention that attempts at contextualizing the classroom and student-instructor relationship have been recognized as an acute deficiency to the new view of instructor response, but only as anecdotal detours in a decontextualized research such as the Straub and Lunsford's (1995) *Twelve Readers Reading: Responding to College Student Writing*. Two of the readers, Anson and Larson, strayed from Straub and Lunsford's fabricated context, creating an audience and a detailed imaginary context for their respective comments. The context of the student writing is seen as central to being able to respond effectively to students' writing. Fife and O'Neill (2001) assert that the search on instructor response has, as a result, drawn conclusions and altered pedagogical practices from partial data, and until this limitation is addressed, response research will remain stagnant.

Fife and O' Neill (2001) state that research on written response had been decontextualized and, "[…]overlooked many parts of the teacher-student interchange that don't produce written artifacts for convenient analysis. Studies that go beyond these convenient written artifacts to employ such methods as conversations and interviews with students and teachers are important despite their very time-consuming and challenging design" (p. 309). As a proposed method of inquiry into the contextual conversation surrounding the written comment, Fife and O'Neill (2001) recommend utilizing conversational theories such as those by Gumperz (1981) and Goffman (1982). These theorists call for detailed investigations into the context of both the speaker and listener

directly asking them what happened in the conversational exchange: “the physical setting, personal background knowledge, attitudes towards each other, socio-cultural assumptions concerning role and status relationships, and social values associated with various message components” as well as turn-taking (cited in Fife & O’Neill, 2001, p. 312).

Hatch (1992) discusses the powerful relationship that is established between a student and an instructor as having four basic types of classroom interaction: instructor in front of class, instructor meets with students in small groups, students work independently and instructor is there to assist if needed, group work organized and controlled by students with little instructor interaction (p. 93). Hatch further elaborates about these styles with research support suggesting that a student’s comfort in one of these styles over another may be partially determined by the culture and the manner in which it most closely matches how the child has learned in the past. An instructor needs to establish an open and trusting relationship with the student in an attempt to present the material so the student can understand.

Few studies investigate how the perceptions of both the instructor and the student to written and verbal feedback on writing assignments, especially in relation to mainstream composition classes where L1 and L2 students are both enrolled. While there has been more research studies investigating written feedback for L1 college composition courses, a much smaller amount has been written in the United States about ESL and multilingual students in mainstream classes.

In addition, a barrier has been built between L1 and L2 composition instructors with both sides arguing over who has the better methodology for teaching writing (Atkinson, 2000; Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Belcher & Hirvela, 2000). The

argument centers around issues of the impact of culture on writing practices, differences in pace, expectations of writing instructors, and different approaches to literature.

Atkinson and Ramanathan's (1995) ethnographic comparison between L1 and L2 writing programs at a US university argues that there is a contrast between what writing pedagogy sets out to do and what happens in the classroom in both L1 and L2 programs. This research problem stemmed out of a growing concern from L1 instructors that L2 students were entering the regular composition courses without the skills necessary to write at the academic level. Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) chose an ethnographic methodology because it is an effective way of exploring cultural differences. Their first research question centered on trying to pinpoint the attitudes and behaviors behind academic writing and teaching, and what practices were being used to teach writing. Their second research question centers on locating the origin of these instructor attitudes, and how they are expressed in and out of the classroom.

Both of the authors are instructors, but one teaches in an ELP (English Language Program) program and the other teaches in the UCP (University Composition Program). Each author observed and conducted ethnographic interviews in the opposite program using each other as guide and interpreter of the practices and policies

Their research effort over ten months was broken down into the following six categories:

1. Participated in two 1-3 hour instructor-training sessions in each program
2. Conducted seven 1-2.5 hour ethnographic interviews (4 ELP, 3 UCP) with administrators from both programs.

3. Conducted 1-2.5 hour ethnographic interviews with six experienced writing instructors (three from each program) about their written comments on student drafts.
4. Observed international students' writing courses in both programs (UCP=27 hours; ELP 20 hours) Courses taught by instructors from ethnographic interviews.
5. Collected various written documents from each program: student orientation handbooks, written assignments, curricular materials, sample lesson plans, student essay drafts with instructor comments, program memos, course and program descriptions, self-studies and external evaluations.
6. Recorded random miscellaneous notes made by the authors.

The results of their study revealed some interesting practices, attitudes, behaviors, and policies in both programs. Through a detailed description of each program, Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) give a basic description of each of the programs. Both programs are individual entities with no subsidiary connection to other departments. Both have been explored on campus for at least thirty years, and both have staff and faculty who are devoted to the departments (meaning not working in two departments at once). A type of teaching "boot camp" (two week training on how to teach writing at that University) is held before the Fall semester each year for new instructors in both programs (Graduate Student TA's mostly).

The UCP offers one course in Basic Writing and then a two-course sequence for native speakers and a two-course sequence for "nonnative speakers." It is not really

explained why the two groups are segregated from one another, and an explanation cannot be inferred because even the course descriptions explain that the two course sequences have the same objectives, curricula, pedagogical approaches, and grading rubrics. The major issue for this program is the pedagogical insistence that students break free from the five-paragraph theme mentality and become creative thinkers. This insistence goes to the extreme by recording down that turning in an essay following a deductive five-paragraph essay will earn the student a D regardless of how well it is written.

The ELP program is more rooted in the linguistic field and its instructors stress the importance of form and development as a pattern for writing. They are advocates for the deductive process. The reasons for this are justified, and it is explained that often the rhetoric as well as the grammar of academic writing must be taught. The easiest way to get around the double problem is to give all students a pattern to follow. The obvious problem here is that upon graduation from the ELP, the student has the basic communication skills. However, the UCP is expecting the student to have already mastered such “elementary” styles and to have progressed onto more academic pursuits such as argumentative style using complex metaphors and conducting different types of research.

The research discovered that both of the programs heavily educate new employees about writing assignments and providing feedback on students’ essays. In both cases, standard methods of written comments on various drafts were used. When the results are compared, a great deal of information can be deduced about both programs. The researchers inferred from the data that both of the programs through their attitudes,

policies, methodology, and curricula make dangerous and unsubstantiated assumptions about their students. The assumptions are that the ELP assumes that their students have native competence in at least one culture, and the second fault is that the administration and faculty assume that the students do not have an understanding of American academic culture.

The next issue uncovered by the research is how the faculty assumption in the UCP program that they are teaching “basic” critical thinking skills is totally off the mark. Their concept of basic still assumes that the early formative years were around western ideology. What this “basic thinking skills” course becomes is a refresher—boring to native English speaking students and a complex, completely new language for nonnative speakers.

The last issue raised by the researchers is the apparent opposing educational and cultural theoretical basis of both programs. Both have established an ultimate goal of helping improve student writing; however, they have different frameworks from where they make their original departure. UCP has its roots in rhetoric and composition studies while ELP was founded, and continues to be controlled, by administrators educated in linguistics with a heavy concentration on format, style, grammar, and process. UCP advocates creative thinking and critical analysis of documents and a general decentralization of grammar.

The concluding thought for the study is a call to all researchers to become more aware of the inherent cultural difference and how those differences have a definite effect on their writing experience. This attention to multicultural training is a wonderful idea, especially concerning giving and correcting assignments. This is an area that has enjoyed

little exposure, but one that really needs more development into alternative methods that work.

Summary: Written Response Speech Genre

The historical adaptations that were present in the literature about written response demonstrated that the paradigm shift from a product-based model of writing instruction to a process-based model had a significant impact on the field. While Hairston (1982) identified three core principles of the product-based paradigm as the belief that students know what they intend to write before they begin writing, that writing was linear, and that teaching grammar and punctuation was teaching writing, differed from the process paradigm's focus on teaching writing as a cognitive linear process from invention through drafting, revising, and editing (Brand, 1989; Emig, 1971; Perl, 1971/2002). The change impacted written response theories because instructors in the product based model saw only the students final draft and now in the process model instructors were involved in the drafting stages, so their involvement in providing feedback through those stages resulted in the focus on when they should comment on drafts, and what they should comment on in the drafts.

The written response tactics that resulted included peer editing (Belcher, 1994; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Emig, 1971; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hacker, 1996; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Newkirk, 1984; Zamel, 1982, 1985, 1987), conferencing (Carcinelli, 1980; Elbow, 1973; Freedman, 1987; Freedman & Katz, 1987; Freedman & Sperling, 1985; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Hacker 1996; Newkirk, 1984; Prior, 1998; Rose, 1982; Walker, 1987; Zamel, 1982; 1985), audio recorded

comments (Anson, 1999; Mellon & Sommers, 2003); minimal marking (Haswell, 1983), and the process of writing content comments before form comments (Horvath, 1984).

As these classroom and written response techniques developed, some of the first studies conducted looking into the results of these in the classroom were published. Knoblauch and Brannon's (1981) study investigating the student reaction to both praise and criticism in comments, oral versus written comments, marginal or end comments, reactions to correcting errors or identifying errors, the use of editorial symbols over detailed explanations. The results suggested that none of the different techniques were significantly more effective that the next. Even more alarming was the evidence in the study stating that students in fact did not read, understand or see the value of any type of comment. Of significance to this study, the work of Ziv (1981) and Knoblauch and Brannon (1981) also investigated the reasons why students were not engaged by comments. Both studies suggested that a poor instructor/student relationship was the most promising explanation.

The results of Knoblauch and Brannon (1981) and the follow up studies Brannon and Knoblauch (1982), and Sommers (1982) introduced key areas of exploration in written feedback: the benefits of facilitative over directive comments, the dangers of appropriating the student's text, the impact of vague "rubber stamped" comments, comments on content before comments on form are beneficial, avoiding the "ideal text," the importance of contextualizing any study by including the student's background in the study, and the benefits of peer feedback and conferences. As a response to much of this early work, the follow up studies for both L1 and L2 researchers made some interesting conclusions. Some of the more holistic commenting concerns in both L1 and L2 literature

such as minimal grading (Elbow,1998; Haswell, 1987) and some of the theories about using marginal comments and end comments (Smith, 1997).

Researchers investigated whether commenting extensively is better than minimal commenting (Haswell, 1983; Elbow, 1984); whether including a grade on early drafts was better than leaving the grade off until the final drafts were collected (Burkland & Grimm, 1983; Young, 1997); whether the comments on early drafts should focus on global writing concerns (organization, content) and leave local (grammar, punctuation) comments to later drafts (Beach, 1979); whether the comments are handwritten, typed, and recorded on audio (Anson, 1997, 1999; Clark, 1981; Farnsworth, 1974; Johanson, 1999; Mellen & Sommers, 2003; Sommers, 1989; Yarbro & Angevine, 1982); whether marginal comments are better than end comments (Danis, 1987; Emig, 1971; Fife & O'Neill, 2001; Leki, 1990; Muncie, 2000; Smith, 1997) whether attaching a rubric to the essay is better than writing on the student's essay (Bartholomae, 1986; White, 1994); or whether one linguistic syntax (imperatives, suggestions, questions, praise, criticism) is better than the others (Brice, 1995; Ferris, 1995, 1996, 2003; Straub, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000). From these studies, the most complex and controversial concerns for both L1 and L2 research are evident in three of the general strategies: minimal marking, global comments before local comments; and end comments and marginal comments; however, none of these studies focused on the importance of contextualizing the study to the environment.

One of the main areas not addressed in the literature is the lack of research investigating how the perceptions of both the instructor and the student about written and

verbal feedback on writing assignments. This has especially been absent in relation to mainstream composition classes where L1 and L2 students are both enrolled.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

> Qualitative research is not looking for principles that are true all the time and in all conditions, like laws of physics; rather, the goal is understanding of specific circumstances, how and why things actually happen in a complex world. Knowledge in qualitative interviewing is situational and conditional. (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, pp. 38-39)

In the field of written response, the context of the student, instructor, class, assignment, and school has been neglected in research studies (Bazerman, 2004; Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Brice, 1995; Cavalcanti, 1990; Connors & Lunsford, 1993; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 2003; Fife & O'Neill, 2001; Paulus, 1999; Straub, 1999). The desire to have more contextualized studies in the field of written response made the choice of a qualitative methodology easy. Designing a contextualized study that included data about the classroom, the assignment, the instructor, and the students was one method for attempting to understand how students respond to written feedback and how, if at all, expressive intonation impacts that response. To understand the manner in which written response on student's work is beneficial to each student, studies have been charged with devising procedures and instruments to explore the practices that instructors engage in to produce written comments as well as the ways that written comments gain there meanings and functions as dynamic elements of specific cultural settings (Bazerman & Prior, 2004).

Research Design

First, the study used a qualitative approach to examine L1 and L2 community college students' attitudes, expectations, and interpretations of the instructor's intended and deciphered intonation in and use of written feedback on essays. Secondly, because two different populations of students were included (L1 and L2), this study also

attempted to discern if there was a difference in how these two groups interpret and utilize feedback.

Researchers interested in written response have utilized various methods to investigate how students react to written feedback. Many investigations in both L1 and L2 literature employed student surveys, asking students to identify types of comments they like and dislike (Arndt, 1993; Cohen, 1987; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Ferris, 1995; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Leki, 1991; McCurdy, 1992; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Straub, 1997; 1999; Straub & Lunsford, 1995). Because of these investigations, a great deal of data have been collected on students' isolated opinions about certain comments. In most of these studies, the data was limited because the method of collection—student surveys—were the only method of data collection used. While that data have allowed researchers to glimpse the complexity of how students react to instructor written response, it has not provided researchers tools to investigate why certain comments have elicited such reactions from students.

As a result, recent calls have been made for qualitative research that takes into consideration not only student reaction to feedback, but also the student's and instructor's prior experiences with writing, written feedback or other variables surrounding the classroom context (Ferris, 1995; 2003; Straub, 1999). The current study used several data collection instruments: informal participant screening instrument, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, instructor think-aloud protocols, and stimulated elicitation interviews in tandem to collect some of the contextual data that had been lacking from the literature.

Restatement of the Research Questions

Following are the research questions:

1. What are the instructor's general attitudes and specific expectations about her comments on L1 and L2 students' essays?
2. What are Native Speaking (L1) and Second Language Learner (L2) community college students' attitudes and expectations about instructors' written comments on their essays?
3. How is the expressive intonation of the instructor's written comments interpreted by the two distinct groups of students?

Background Information of the College

Fahey College is a non-profit private community college, regionally accredited through the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The college provides focused eighteen-month Associate in Applied Science and Associate of Arts degrees in Business, Computer Technology, and Healthcare. The college operates on an eleven-week, year-round quarter system. Classes meet on either two days per week (M/W or T/TR) for 100 minutes or four days per week (M-TR) for 50 minutes with Fridays set aside for office hours and tutorial days.

Fahey College has a rich history in Northern California. The college has had campuses in various northern California locations, and currently consists of eleven campuses in three states: California, Oregon, and Hawaii. Across the campuses, Fahey College maintains an instructor to student ratio of 1:20. Throughout the campuses are approximately 8,000 students: 53% female and 40% male. Fifty percent of the student

population are between the ages of 19 and 24 and 24% are between the ages of 25-34. Forty percent of the student population work full-time while also attending Fahey full-time. The demographics of this student population are quite diverse: "23% Asian or Pacific Islander; 21% Hispanic; 26% Caucasian; 10% African American; and 19% other" (*Fahey College fact sheet*). The majority of students are the first person in their family to attend college, and Fahey College asserts that many of these students are also recent immigrants to the United States.

Each campus is a kind of satellite campus with a central headquarters working to maintain consistency of educational excellence across all of the campuses. Fahey's curriculum development team works with each campus in the creation of the course learning outcomes, methods of delivery, textbook selection, and sharing of best practices from the faculty. Campus programs offered reflect the industry demand of the particular geographic region surrounding the campus. The central tenet behind the educational programs focuses on providing students with the skills needed to succeed in the workforce and/or continue with other educational pursuits.

Contextualizing Written Response Speech Genres

One of the most intriguing aspects of contextualizing this study was the absence in the literature of investigations into a similar environment. In my review of the literature there are very few studies about written response involving L1 and L2 community college students in the same class regardless of the colleges two or four year degree status (Atkinson, 2000; Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Clark, 1986; Clark & Weidenhaupt, 1992; Dong, 2001; Fregeau, 1999; Shih, 1999). When I sought out studies primarily focusing on community college writing environments that included both L1 and

L2 students in the same class, investigating the complex hermeneutic interaction of written response between these two groups of students and the instructor, I was unable to locate any studies.

Included in this contextual approach was some basic information about the college, and the student population. Next, various aspects about the course were presented including, prerequisites to the course, the course description, the recommended course size, the number and style of the assignments that will be completed during the entire course, Ms. Terry's selection of a personal narrative for the first assignment, the manner in which the assignment was delivered to the students, the scheduled steps of Ms. Terry's scaffolded Personal Narrative writing assignment, and the instructor's interaction with the class and with individual students.

College Composition and Research Course at Fahey College

College Composition and Research is a required course at Fahey College and is usually completed when students are in the third or fourth quarter of the six-quarter program at Fahey College. Students are placed in the College Composition and Research after completing two prerequisite English classes at Fahey or via transfer credit from another college. The rigor of the course emulates first-year composition courses at local four-year institutions and was designed to increase the number of units Fahey students could transfer upon matriculation from Fahey College. While it was designed to fulfill this goal, the writing skills of the students entering Fahey makes the direct transferability of this course more difficult; the issue is not just writing skills but is situated more appropriately in the different attitudes Fahey students have toward writing than the attitudes of students at more traditional four-year colleges in the area.

In chapter II, one study that noted this rift between the community college population and the four-year college population was Mellen and Sommers' (2003) investigation into the use of audio-recorded comments in lieu of the traditional written response. From their investigation, Mellen and Sommers compiled a brief list of some common traits of community college students. The following list presents the major traits of community college students: usually older than traditional four-year college students, are currently working, are married, have children, are more driven, and paradoxically are more confident about their writing, yet more fearful about being evaluated. While making statements like this without providing some kind of quantifiable empirical support could be misconstrued as stereotyping community college students, it is not intended to carry a generalizable characterization of all or even most community college students in that study. Coincidentally, at Fahey College, the students are older than at a more traditional 4-year university; most of the students do work while attending school: many are married with children; and most have not had the best experiences with education in the past. In addition, and as noted numerous times in the interviews between Ms. Terry and myself, Fahey classrooms typically reflect a vast range of educational and language abilities and life experiences and abilities.

This is particularly true in the English classes. It is common to have one to three students who have less than two years experience learning English in the same class with students who have bachelor's degrees either from a United States colleges or an international school. For example, the class observed in this study was composed of 21 students: nine identified English as his or her native language; seven noted that English was not his/ her native language; the remaining five were absent on the day, the initial

screening tool was distributed. This is particularly challenging because a teacher may have a class of 25-30 students with students across a wide range of abilities.

College Composition and Research:
Course Description, Assignment Sequence, and the Personal Narrative

Ms. Terry's course met in a computer lab, stocked with 28-networked computers and one printer. The instant access to computers accommodates the college-mandated student learning outcomes. At the conclusion of the class, a student should be able to revise essays for errors with punctuation, mechanics, style, and grammar. In addition, the course is designed to help students hone their critical thinking and reading skills through the reading and writing of college level academic essays using Modern Language Association (MLA) in-text citations and works cited pages. During the 11-week quarter, students are expected to complete three essay assignments and give oral presentation. The course guidelines recommend that the students begin with a shorter 2-4 page essay, followed by the major 8-10 page research paper, and ending with a third 3-5 page essay.

Research Participants

Instructor: Ms. Terry

The instructor of the class College Composition and Research (ENGL 155) in the study is a dedicated and passionate educator with 19 years teaching experience at Fahey College, several advanced degrees, and a California Community College General Education Teaching Credential. She chose the name Ms. Terry as her pseudonym in the study, and she wanted me to be very careful about not revealing her identity in this study. She is a consummate educator with a passion for learning and teaching.

Her educational career spans teaching a variety of subjects at the junior high, high school, and college level, including a six-year voyage with the Navy, teaching basic math and language skills, business management, and helping service men and women earn their General Educational Development diplomas (GED's) and improve their Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) scores. She is a knowledgeable, dedicated, versatile educator who meets challenges with a professional, organized, respectful, and equitable approach. There are no obstacles, only opportunities for Ms. Terry as she exemplified in the first semi-structured interview during the first week of the study:

> Robb: Did you teach a wide variety of disciplines like you do at Fahey College?
>
> Ms. T: [laughing as she speaks through the entire paragraph] Jack of all trades, master of none from the get go. The first thing they told me at my first teaching job. The first day the principal, who was a drama major, told me that there was a man who had a community theater. And neither of them wanted to teach it, so I got to teach Drama as a first-year teacher with two people who were experts.
>
> Robb: And you were teaching with them?
>
> Ms. T: I was teaching the students—with no help. It was very interesting.

From her first year as a teacher, she was asked to teach a class that was outside of her area of expertise, and instead of shying away from the situation, she stated, "I got to teach Drama." She did not say "I had to" or "I was forced to," but she was allowed to teach Drama.

This positivistic attitude and approach to teaching has not changed. In her current role over the past 19 years at Fahey College, she has taught: Basic Math, Algebra, Environmental Science, Psychology, Human Resource management, Business management, Business Law, Essential Language Skills, Professional Career Development, Contemporary Literature, Composition and Reading, College Composition

and Research, Keyboarding, and Public Speaking. Her course load during the current study was no exception. She had a full teaching load of five classes totaling 17 units: Keyboarding, Environmental Science, Business Administration, College Algebra, and College Composition and Research. This is a massive teaching load especially considering that each of these classes ranged from 18-34 students.

At the time of the study, she taught one section of College Composition and Research, Essential Language Skills, Business Math, Public Speaking, and Keyboarding. The combined student population of all of her courses combined to a staggering 118—a significant overload compared to the National Council of Teachers of English's (NCTE) recommendation of forty-five students from a maximum of three courses. In addition, her teaching load for this quarter included five different classes—five preps, five (or more) textbooks, and five different grading standards. At Fahey College, and many community colleges across the country, these working conditions are not unusual. The majority of Fahey College instructors faced similar teaching loads during the April 2006 quarter.

Ms. Terry is one of the most respected instructors on the campus by both students and other instructors. I asked Ms. Terry if she would be interested in opening her class as the setting for the study, and she agreed if her identity would remain confidential. Her reputation and expertise were not the only factors affecting my course and section selection for this study. I would be remiss to not point out that I had no other choices at Fahey College, so the choice was also a convenience selection. I wanted to complete my data collection during the April 2006 quarter at Fahey College. Since I am also an English instructor at the same campus as Ms. Terry, arranging to investigate a section of College Composition and Research proved to be difficult because there are only two

English instructors who had the necessary qualifications and credentials to teach College Composition and Research. Currently, there are only two individuals on campus who meet the Western Association of Schools and Colleges' (WASC) faculty requirements to teach College Composition and Research: Ms. Terry and myself. During the April 2006 quarter, there were only two sections of the class: one in the evening, which I was teaching, and Ms. Terry's section during the day. Although it was possible to conduct the study in my own classroom, since the evening class had a student population of six students, I chose not to use my own class. For these reasons, Ms. Terry and her students were asked to participate using a convenience selection approach.

Introduction to Ms. Terry's First Essay Assignment

On the second day of the quarter, the first day of in-class observations, Ms. Terry told the students that she wanted them to write a narrative essay that uses descriptors to paint a mental picture for their audience and that students should reference the reading assignments for that class as examples. She told them that she wanted them to choose a topic that allowed them to bring in either a picture or some artifact that was reflective or symbolic of the narrative they were writing, and that they needed to bring this artifact to class on the day they presented their essay to the class. () She distributed three handouts to the class while she explained the requirements of the assignment. The paper was to be 2-3 pages in length, double-spaced, and in a 12 point font. She asked the class to look at the handout "Manuscript Guidelines for English Essays" for more details about the format. She told the students that they would have the next class session to work on these essays, and that by the end of the next class; she would be recording a grade and going over each student's brainstorm of the topic and outline of the narrative. She ended the

class saying that the handout labeled "Pre-writing Analysis" should help them brainstorm, and that the third handout titled "Example Outline" shows them the structure she expects to see when they show her their outline at the end of the next class meeting.

After the students had left the room, I approached Ms. Terry, thanked her again for allowing me to conduct my research with her and her students, and asked her for a copy of the assignment prompt which I assumed she had distributed when I had left to make photocopies of the consent forms. Ms. Terry looked surprised when I asked about this, her eyebrows rising as she let out a low "oh." She said to me that she thought she had distributed it, but now that she thought about it she had not and she would distribute them at the next class.

The context of the assignment prompt in the current study is another area that must be accounted for as possibly contributing to the student's reaction to the instructor's comments. In the literature review, the form and distribution of the assignment prompt is an area that has not really been thoroughly explored or included in the analysis of student's reactions to written comments

> Robb: Is there any particular reason that you wanted to have them write a narrative?
>
> Ms. T: Yes, because I wanted them to do something to tell a story with which something they were familiar. Without research.
>
> Robb: You feel that the students each benefit from having to write about something that is their own experience, without having research looming.
>
> Ms. T: Yes, it warms them up for the research.
>
> Robb: Is there anything that you feel is more beneficial about writing a narrative as a style of writing.
>
> Ms. T: I think it lets them be a little bit freer than they will be when they get to doing the research paper.

Ms. Terry's explanation for selecting a narrative rhetorical pattern required that I re-focus my observations and questions to ascertain how an instructor's rhetorical intentions interacted with the student's reactions to the assignment as well as to the written response. In addition, it also made me think a little bit more, about how an instructor not only chooses an assignment, but also how s/he determines how much guidance, via handouts, in class activities and a scaffolded schedule of assignments is needed.

Ms. Terry: In-Class Student-Instructor Conferences

Ms. Terry's student-instructor conferences were very comfortable for the students. Where research would suggest the absence of formal instruction or training from Ms. Terry in regards to how the students should conduct themselves in the peer response sessions resulted in sporadic one-sided participation (Carcinelli, 1980, Ferris, 2003), the absence of a formal schedule or agenda worked well in the conferences during this study. Ms. Terry's rationale for keeping the conferences in such a loose framework was to alleviate any student anxiety that may come as a result of the one-on-one discussion. All of the students expressed his or her appreciation for the instructor's time and comments particularly noting how this experience allowed each of them to glimpse into Ms. Terry's thought process as she read the essay.

Student Participants

The four students who participated in the study were in a College Composition and Research course at Fahey College in the April 2006 quarter. This course was a graduation requirement for all of the students on campus, so the class had students from all three of the degree programs: Medical, Business, and Information Technology. The

students successfully completed the prerequisite course Composition and Reading prior to enrolling to College Composition and Research. All of the participants took the Composition and Reading within six months of enrolling in College Composition and Research, so they were not out of practice with academic writing in a college setting.

Table 1: Basic Participant Information

Participants' Pseudonym	Role	Language Classification
Ms. Terry	Instructor of College Composition and Research	English
Tatiana	4th Quarter Business Student	L1 English
Tassianna	4th Quarter Criminal Justice Student	L1 English
Paul	3rd Quarter Network Security Student	L2 Spanish
Ida	3rd Quarter Accounting Student	L2 Mandarin

My insider knowledge and the use of a predetermined criterion selection-screening tool where, "participants are selected who meet some important predetermined criterion" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 141) helped determine the students in the class I asked to continue as one of the four participants.

Tatiana (L1 English)

Tatiana was a dedicated Business major at Fahey College. She was in her fourth quarter, and had just recently decided to overload her schedule, taking six classes, so she could graduate a quarter early. She was born and raised in the same house she lives in now in Novato, California, and she was in her early twenties at the time of the study, enrolled in Fahey College fulltime (plus an additional four units). In addition to her busy academic life, she has been a teller at West America Bank for the past three years.

During those three years, she had enrolled and eventually dropped out of two community colleges in the Bay Area. When she started these schools, she was taking a

computer and a math class at one school and an English class at another college. Her experience in an English class at another college, a first-year composition course, was a bad experience and was one of the factors leading to her enrolling at Fahey College instead.

Tatiana remembered receiving feedback through peer response activities, and receiving comments both in the margin and through end comments that focused more on grammar (local) concepts than on global (content). In general, she felt that instructors' written comments should be returned to the participants within a week from their submission depending on the size of the class and the length of the assignment. In addition, on the screening tool she estimated that the instructor spent about 20 minutes per paper.

> Tatiana: In the English class, we did a lot of essays and a lot of you know fixing sentences. You know, where does the comma go, and you know, if it is a fragment, how you would change it. Therefore, we did a lot of that, but I ended up not passing; I dropped out because… it was too… I guess it was just too frustrating for me or too hard. I guess… I do not know… I am not used to it was like a big class and teacher does not know me, and I am just…That is why mostly I came to Fahey too is because [Robb: So it was like how big?] Like 50 and the teacher does not know your name and does not know who the heck you are, and stuff, and it was just felt like I needed help more one-on-one help. And they are just like, "oh go to the lab." And it is just like ohhhhhh there is a ton of people in there (Emphatic sigh) and you have to like wait in line. You actually had to put your name on the list and make an appointment, and I am like okay well you know, I am trying to do my homework that I would have to wait for this appointment, and some of them with would not be until like five o'clock at night and that would be the next available appointment. So you know, I just dropped out of the class, because you know, I just felt like I just could not get the help that I felt like I really needed.

Tatiana was in that class for about a month and reported writing about five short essays, but she only remembers getting one or two back, and the only reason she remembers those as standing out to her was the amount of the comments and the color of the ink:

> Tatiana**:** Yeah, the red marks all over the paper. [Tatiana laughs]. [Robb: Red marks, so he used a read pen huh"] Yeah, I think it is mainly like my […] I have a lot of trouble writing like a thesis. Or getting my paper started, trying to make it catchy, and you know not like "My paper is about…" I have trouble with my verb tense using past and present tense sometimes Or you know run-on sentences, and the fragment sentences, but I have gotten a lot better at those now, but back then[…] at another bay area college when I was in that class that was my problem too.

In the interviews, Tatiana's explanations from her other writing experiences revealed similar patterns of written feedback from her past. The following section reported what attitudes and expectations about written response she brought with her when she started at Fahey College.

Tatiana had fond memories of writing and writing classes throughout her elementary and junior high years, but it was when she began her ninth grade year she had a different kind of experience. Her instructor for this class had a very prescribed format for writing. He expected the students to put the essay into a very restricted format, or he would return it to them ungraded and tell them to do it again. The rigid format of this instructor is best described in her own words:

> Tatiana**:** …The one class I was telling you about with the weird English teacher in high school. He would He had this concept of us folding our papers a certain way for margins, and then you could not pass the folded line… he… I do not know but so you had to write your paper, and that would be a rough draft and then you had to write it again, and stuff like that. So that's how he had us students write, so we always had a rough draft and then every paper started off with there are three reasons why blah blah blah. The first reason why blah, blah, blah. The second reason….and then the conclusion paragraph had to begin with these are the three reasons why first…second, third, and rename it all over again. That was all I learned how to do.

Tatiana had another class with this same high school instructor her junior year, with the same formulaic approach and rigid product based assignments. However, aside from this one individual, she described an eventless high school writing experience, receiving different types of written response to her writing. Tatiana also noted that even

though these comments were written about what needs to be corrected, that she has only been given the opportunity to make revisions after that point by one instructor in high school.

Tassianna (L1 English)

When the study began, Tassianna was in her fourth quarter at Fahey College, majoring in Business Administration with an emphasis in Criminal Justice. She was a nontraditional student in her early forties, coming to college after raising her son and working in retail for over 15 years. Her father was in the military and as a result she spent much of her youth traveling every two years or so to a new location: Dover, Delaware, Turkey, Reno, Nevada, Iceland, and finally to Fairfield, California. Her enthusiasm for education and her energy are contagious and she is very popular on campus, involving herself in the Fahey student mentor program and tutoring.

Tassianna had always enjoyed writing for as long as she could remember, and her most fond memories of school were from her tutors, writing, and music teachers in Iceland and the United States. Her experiences with written instruction had been positive and even those instances where she experienced less than desirable writing environments and writing assignments she had always found a way to learn from the experience.

Ida (L2 Mandarin)

Ida was in her fourth quarter when she participated in this study. She grew up in Beijing, China, and lived there with her family until she was twenty-six when she moved to the United States. She went to the state run schools in China and then to a financial trade college where she earned her bachelor's degree in accounting. She spent five years

working at the International Trade Company in the Accounts Payable and Customer Service departments before coming to the United States in 1996.

Ida's writing assignments through high school never required a research paper, and she expressed some anxiety about the current class's requirement for an 8-10 page research paper. Her overall attitude about writing is somewhat negative in regards to her experience writing in Chinese—rule driven, forced topics, unhelpful instructor comments. She was also uncomfortable writing in English, but not for the same reasons--lack of experience and confidence with English grammar and punctuation. She was not worried about the structure and organization of the essay, which were never commented on in her Chinese writing assignments; she just wanted help with the English grammar

Paul (L1 Spanish until age 6 then English)

Paul was in his third quarter at Fahey College when he agreed to participate in the study. He was a Network Security major, and was one of three students in the class whom I had not had the pleasure of teaching. I was particularly interested in talking with Paul because of his comments on the participant-screening tool. He was one of three students in the class who had identified themselves as a native speaker of English, wrote that they were born in the United States, identified themselves as speaking a second language, and in the final section of the screening tool had also described themselves as having spoken a language other than English for a time either equal to or longer than they had spoken English.

Paul's attitude about education through junior high and high school was negative, viewing school as something that was forced upon him from both his mom and various instructors. In general, he felt a complete lack of respect for his interests, and this was

especially evident in his memories about writing classes. Paul remembers being required to write essays that involved research, but the topics allowed were not topics of interest to him. As a result, Paul also suggested that since his instructors did not allow him to write about topics he enjoyed he did not really care what the instructor wrote on his paper. Furthermore, he explained that a possible result of this lack of connection to his interests, he did not remember receiving any comments on his essays when they were returned. If there were comments he did not remember feeling encouraged by the comments or by anything at all that happened in his classes, so in his opinion, the comments would not have been facilitative.

Paul's attitude toward writing was not positive. In his high school experiences, he remembered writing classes as being totally dictated by issues of correct usage. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling were stressed as the elements of good writing. In his high school experience, little emphasis was placed on structure and content. Even these memories were lined with negative experiences because in one of his last classes in high school, he was reading a fellow student's essay and helping them with punctuation and grammar, and his teacher was shocked that he was able to help. Paul connected this experience as just one of the many reasons that he had not liked writing classes in the past. He viewed the classes as largely unimportant to his academic endeavors, and he explained at several different points during the interviews that he did not remember much about the classes he took in high school because they were just not relevant to him. Paul's overall opinion of English teachers was that they were "tough… tough because they were all different…they were not alike. They were all different; they all had their own styles, their own type, or way of teaching, it was all very confusing to [him]." Paul

saw the entire class as confusing because every teacher approached the class differently; he did not see any consistency between courses, and he eventually interpreted success in class as being more akin to adapting his writing style to the style of the instructor rather than expressing himself and his interests. His adaptation was most specifically influenced through the responses he received to his writing assignments. His general assumptions about written comments stemmed from numerous different expectations he has about writing teachers and how writing teachers go about writing comments on participant's essays.

Data Collection

> To divorce the act, word, or gesture from its context is, for the qualitative researcher, to lose sight of significance. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p.5)

The current study employed qualitative methods of data collection. A qualitative framework allowed the researcher to investigate the full context of written feedback in a community college classroom. In particular, this framework explored the process an instructor employed while creating written feedback; how it is initially viewed by students; how students reacted to the comments, the specific writing assignment, the class, and the instructor; and how the students intonated the comments. The remainder of this section described the specific methods of data collection. Each method of inquiry was divided into two distinct parts. The first part defined the particular qualitative tool and its validity and reliability. The second part explained how this tool was used specifically in this study. To aid in the visualization of the study's scope, the next section provides a timeline of the data collection sequence.

Data Collection Time Line

The study collected data for the first four weeks of an eleven-week quarter beginning on April 25, 2006. The class met twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:50 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. at Fahey College-in the Bay Area. The collection of data began on April 25, 2006, the second official day of class, and was completed after the first paper was returned to the students.

#	Data Collection Timeline	April, 2006 – May, 2006 (M 24 – W 31)
1	Introduction to Study	Introduction to Study
1.1	*Research Information Sheet, Informed Consent Form, Participant Bill of Rights*	Student & Instructor Consent form Signed
1.2	*Administer and Collect Participant Screening Tool*	20 Minute Screening Tool
2	Classroom Observations Participant-as-Observer	Every Tuesday and Thursday 11:40 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
3	Analyze Screening Tool Determine/Email Four Students to Continue	Petition four students to continue
4	Semi-Structured Interview I: Student	30-45 Minute Interview with each Student
5	Semi-Structured Interview I: Instructor	30-45 minute Interview with Instructor
6	Semi-Structured Interview II: Student	30- 45 Minute Interview/On or Near essay Due Date
7	Semi-Structured Interview II: Instructor	Instructor Think-Aloud Training Session at End of Interview
8	Instructor Think-Aloud Sessions at Instructor's Home	Ms. Terry Records Thoughts as She Reads Students' Essays
9	Stimulated Elicitation Interview Instructor	Researcher and Instructor Listen to Recordings
10	Stimulated Elicitation Interview Student	Essay Returned-Researcher Observes Reaction

Figure 1 Data Collection Timeline

Participant Screening Tool

The purpose of the participant-screening tool (Appendix C) in the current study was to identify four students from the College Composition and Research course to participate in the study. The screening tool was designed to apply a criterion selection

procedure to choose four students from the class. Polkinghorne (2005) used this selection tool when a researcher was employing a qualitative study, looking for certain characteristics of a group of participants. An interview or screening tool can be used to collect, "important predetermined criterion" so that a researcher could more readily approach only those individuals who meet the criterion the researcher is investigating (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 141). The predetermined criterion for this selection process reflected two important categories in this study: self-identified language classification as either first language speakers of English (L1) and second language speakers of English (L2) and the student's general attitude of written comments. In addition, the instrument collected four pieces of demographic information: gender, age range, country of birth, and major.

Creating the Participant Screening Tool

The student's self-identified first language was the most important criteria in this study. Since there are many different classes of first language proficiency or identification (English Language Learner (ELL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Generation 1.5, First Language Speaker of English/English as a First Language (L1), and Second Language Speaker of English/English as a Second Language (L2), the screening tool collected information about language and some contextual information which helped to present a detailed portrait of the student's language experience and decrease the possibility of a misunderstanding to the question, "Is English your native language?" The first clarifying question may initially seem to be redundant of the first, asking, "Do you speak any other languages other than English?" This question allowed the researcher to begin to see how the student defined "native language." The next section was a chart with

categorical questions in the first row and blank boxes for the student to provide answers. (See Appendix C). The statement above the chart asked the students to list the language in the first column and to respond to the corresponding questions for each language s/he had identified. The categories were: number of years using the language, country where language was learned, age when began learning the language, manner of language instruction, language used at home, written proficiency, reading proficiency, and spoken proficiency.

The other criterion relevant to this study was the student's general attitude about written comments. The screening tool asked three open-ended questions: the student's opinion as to the purpose of written feedback in his or her past experiences, ,how much time the student thinks an instructor spends commenting on a three-five page essay, and if the student feels the number of comments on a paper directly indicates the student's performance on the assignment.

This screening tool determined students' language experience, and the additional information introduced a snapshot of the students' basic attitudes toward written comments before the study began. This information allowed the researcher to make a selection when several students had similar attitudes and experiences with the English language. Later in the study, this information helped the researcher generate questions for the interviews, and/or determine how the students' impressions of written comments compared to his or her responses before and after s/he received written comments from their instructor, Ms. Terry, in his or her current class.

Before the screening tool was used, the researcher obtained a class roster before the start of the quarter. Once the Participant-Screening Tool had been finalized and

printed, the researcher wrote a number between 1-25 on the back of each tool. I shuffled the screening tools, then sat down, and assigned each number to one of the students on the roster. The sheet of paper containing the student's name and his or her screening tool's number was never stored with the actual folder containing the Participant-Screening Tools.

Procedure for Distributing Participant-Screening Tool

The participant-screening tool along with informed consent forms were distributed and collected on April 25, 2006, the first day of the study. The researcher distributed the Participant Screening Tool, (each marked with a random number on the back that had been matched with a student name from the roster), read the instructions, answered questions, and collected the screening tools. The researcher made copies of all of the signed informed consent forms, presenting each participant with a signed copy.

Classroom Observations

A staple method of collecting data in qualitative research is from observations. There are numerous techniques for collecting observational data: direct observation, conversational analysis, eavesdropping, descriptive classroom maps, interaction maps, student time on task tools, noting non-verbal forms of communication, instructor instructions, explanations, handouts, providing information about procedures, events, history from an Emic/Insider perspective, observing what does not happen, physical room flow of both teacher and students, and researcher reflexivity are valuable tools in the collection of data from observations (Patton, 2004, p. 295).

Procedures for Classroom Observations—Beginning April 25, 2006 at 11:50 a.m.

The researcher acted as an observer-as-participant in the class. During the observations, the researcher collected data about the context of the classroom via classroom maps, taking field notes of the instructor's presentation of material about the first essay assignment, and various aspects of the teacher-student interaction during the observations. The goal of the observer in the study was to document the instructor's presentation of course material, explanation, and distribution of assignments, and the students' reaction to the course noting the instructor's and students' behavior in the class.

I took detailed field notes during class sessions and used a digital voice recorder immediately following the class to read notes aloud, clarifying information taken down during the observation. In addition, daily maps of the classroom environment were drawn depicting the physical characteristics of the class, location of the students participating in the study, and tracking the flow of student-instructor activity on a daily basis.

This approach was devised in an attempt to address Ferris's (2003) argument that much of the L1 and L2 research on instructor response has been decontextualized. She asserts that future studies investigating instructor feedback need to go beyond surveys, controlled experimental designs, or text analysis. Researchers obtain important data from these practices, but the richness of the data can be misconstrued, over simplified or formulaic without some understanding of the classroom context. As a solution, she called for more research to include data obtained from classroom observations. In particular, Ferris (2003) notes several aspects of the classroom context, which researchers should observe as a method for contextualizing instructor's written feedback:

1. Are drafts collected and revision allowed and encouraged?

2. Are revision techniques taught and modeled, or is it assumed that students know how to revise effectively on their own?
3. Is composition taught as a process?
4. Does the instructor practice consistent and clear feedback procedures and are students aware of these procedures?
5. Are students allowed or encouraged to question the teacher about feedback they have received?
6. Are students required to consider teacher feedback as they revise?
7. Does the teacher provide feedback in the same way that they say they will provide feedback?

I used a coding strategy to record the occurrence of any of these topics in the classroom. In addition, observational notes recorded whether a response to one of these questions was the result of a student's question, or presented in the instructor's lecture or handouts. At the end of every class, I reviewed the class map and coding sheet, noting if any of the questions had been addressed on that day. When one of the above questions was addressed in the class, I noted down when it was introduced, the amount of time spent on the topic, emphasis placed on the issue, student's reception of the material, how the instructor checked for understanding, and collected any accompanying documentation that was distributed to the students.

Semi-Structured and Stimulated Elicitation Interviews

Interviews in the current study took take place at Fahey College several times during the course of the study. Bogden and Biklen (2007) explain that the goal of interviews in qualitative studies is, "to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words

so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (p. 103). All of the interviews were recorded using a Sony ICS-MX20 digital recorder so I could transcribe the interviews and presented direct quotes from all of the participants. The general guidelines for a semi-structured interview allowed the qualitative researcher to obtain data about specific aspects related to the study, but gave him or her the freedom to further investigate responses from each individual. I was aware of the hectic schedules of the students and made every effort to schedule these interviews at the student's convenience. During this study, each student participant and the instructor in the study had two semi-structured interviews and one stimulated elicitation interview.

A stimulated elicitation interview uses an external stimulus, such as a picture, text, or sound to aid the interviewee in recalling more specific responses to questions than could be obtained from straight memory recall. In a landmark study, Prior (2004) argued that when interviewees were given a text, section of a text, a photograph, or an audio or video recording, they were capable of providing richer responses (p. 188-89).

Semi-structured Student Interview I: Attitudes, Expectations and Prior Experiences

This first Semi-Structured Student Interview I was scheduled on the day each of the four students agreed to continue in the study and was conducted within three days of that date.

Semi-structured Instructor Interview I: Attitudes, Expectations and Prior Experiences

The Semi-Structured Instructor Interview with the instructor was conducted during the first calendar week of the class. The purpose of these interviews was to become acquainted with the participants, answer any of his or her questions and to ask any additional follow-up questions based on the students' and instructor's responses to

the screening tools' questions. The students and instructor were asked to provide a pseudonym, which was used in the transcripts and in the final report. Several questions were asked about the educational background, students' success in English classes, attitudes towards past English classes and instructors. Specific questions were included about students' attitudes and expectations for written comments.

Semi-structured Interviews II: Attitudes about the Completed Essay

The students and the instructors were asked to interview again, when the first essay was submitted to the instructor. I scheduled these interviews to be conducted either on the day the essay was submitted or within forty-eight hours of its submission to the instructor. The purpose of this interview was to investigate the student's attitudes and expectations about the essay s/he just submitted. The second Semi-Structured Student Interview comprised questions derived from prior responses to the Participant-Screening Tool and first interview and from my observations from the classroom.

A second semi-structured instructor interview was conducted with the instructor on the day that the essays were submitted. The questions for this interview were created from classroom observations, the participant-screening tool, and from the previous interview. These questions revolved around the instructor's attitude about the class, the essay assignment, his or her reflections on the course so far, and his or her strategy for providing feedback on the students' essays.

Stimulated Elicitation Interviews

After the instructor completed the audio, think-aloud protocol of her reading and commenting on each participant's essay, a stimulated elicitation interview with the Instructor was conducted. The instructor and I listened to the protocol together, stopping

the recording when either the instructor or I had a question or if the instructor wanted to explain or clarify some aspect of the recording.

In a similar manner, each student was also asked to participate in a stimulated elicitation interview about his or her reaction to reviewing the instructor's comments on his or her essay. The questions were derived from listening to the instructor think-aloud for each participant, and by looking back through the transcripts from earlier interviews. During the student stimulated elicitation interviews, the students received his or her essay and I sat across the room and observed the student's reaction. From this observation, I asked questions to clarify the student's reaction to the comments.

Think-Aloud Protocols

The origin of this technique stems from psychologists studying the cognitive processes of individuals as they are completing a task. Emig (1971) and Flower and Hayes (1981) were among the first writing researchers to employ this technique as a manner of investigating the thought process students engage in when writing. The data collected from the think-aloud protocols allows researcher to glimpse the cognitive processes utilized by participants as they engage in specific writing tasks; however, given the complexity of the thought process that goes into writing, the validity of the technique as an accurate record of the process was questioned by researchers (Prior, 2004; Smagorinsky, 1994). Advocates for think-aloud protocols modified the manner in which the protocols were used, moving away from the traditional cognitive method of tracing a writer's thought process as they write, and using think-aloud protocols to investigate the thought processes of individuals as they read and respond to a text (Auten, 1984;

Berkenkotter, 1983; Brice, 1995; Hayes & Daiker, 1985; Hyland, 1998, 2001; Teo, 2004).

Brice's (1995) work is of particular interest to this study, as she used the protocols to investigate how ESL students reacted to their instructor's written comments. Brice (1995) videotaped the protocol sessions, interviewed the students after the protocol sessions, and had students complete a questionnaire about written feedback on a writing assignment. The present study also used think-aloud protocols, a questionnaire, and interviews to investigate written feedback.

While Brice (1995) was interested in what type of comments ESL students like and dislike, this study added classroom observations to investigate possible explanations for why students preferred certain comments to others and how the expressive intonation in which the comment was read impacted students' reactions to the comment. The use of think-aloud protocols was twofold.

Instructor Think-Aloud Protocols

First, the instructor used a Sony ICD-MX20 digital voice recorder to record her thought process as she read and provided feedback on each participant's essay assignment. Using a modified version of Hyland's (2001) technique for instructor think-aloud protocols, the current study requested that the instructor begin recording as soon as she opened the envelope explaining the procedures for the protocol. The instructions were modified based on the guidelines suggested by Prior (2004). As soon as possible after the think-aloud protocol was completed, I interviewed the instructor about the protocol as described in the instructor's stimulated elicitation interview of this study.

Data Analysis

> Transformation, Conversion, Synthesis. Whole from parts. Sense-making. Such motifs run through qualitative analysis like golden threads in a royal garment. They decorate and enhance its quality, but they may also distract attention from the basic cloth that gives the garment its strength and shape—the skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, diligence, and work of the garment maker. (Patton, 2002, p. 432)

One of the aspects of qualitative analysis that I needed to monitor continually was demonstrating reflexivity in the data collection and analysis. The data from all of the methods of collection, excluding the screening tool, were transcribed using standard linguistic notations and diacritic marks.

Participant Screening Tool

The analysis of the data from the screening tool involved separating the tools into two piles, depending on how each person self-identified as either first or second language learners of English. The rest of the data collected was analyzed for a more detailed interpretation of the student's language experience. The data from this screening tool as well as from the interviews was useful in explaining the contextual background from which each of the students has come.

Classroom Observations

The transcriptions from both the in-class observations and my field notes were examined looking for common themes that are reflective of not only the research questions but also of the components of the Bakhtinian utterance. The relation of the narratives to the Bakhtinian principles allowed me to establish a framework around the narratives function inside of the Bakhtinian speech genre.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The transcriptions from the first semi-structured interviews were thoroughly explored identifying repetitious concepts and categorizing these into general themes of the students' memories and thoughts about his or her educational experience. I investigated how the "utterances from the past" have developed the students' current identification of commenting expectations.

I transcribed the second semi-structured interviews, and after thorough investigation, the texts were examined for themes of the student's current perceptions about comments. Once again, the Bakhtinian speech genre components were used to search for commonalities and differences between each student's first and second interview.

Stimulated Elicitation Interviews

Prior (2004) discussed various different manners of looking at how transcripts from stimulated elicitation interviews can be investigated. During this interview, I returned the graded essay, and used an audio recording and my field observations to attempt to capture as much as possible of the context enveloping the moment the student reacted to the instructor's comments. The contextual nature of the utterance included the physical environment surrounding the live communication. The stimulated elicitation interviews were conducted when the participants received his or her essay back from the instructor. The students were observed while they initially went over the essays. As each one went through his or her essay, I sat out of his/her field of vision and noted any physical and verbal response to the text. I recorded body posture, gestures, facial expressions, verbalizations, time per page, and the chronological process of his or her

actions. These notes were not at all interpreted to be symbolic of emotional states, but rather to act as stimulated elicitations to help me ask questions using these expressions as memory aids, so each student could more readily discuss what s/he was thinking as s/he engaged with his or her essay. For example, 10 seconds into Tassianna's reading she chuckled. In the interview, I did not interrupt her at that moment to ask why she chuckled. When she finished reviewing her essay, I asked her to talk about what made her chuckle about 10 seconds into the reading. Using this technique, each student explained his or her reactions to the written response using the notes to stimulate memory recall to specific comments.

After the students looked through the essay, I asked each student to discuss his or her reaction to the essay and its comments, and I used the notes of his or her reaction to ask more directed questions about the comments. In particular, I was interested in asking the students to explain the process they took as they read the comments. I was particularly interested in what they looked at first when receiving an essay back from an instructor. The following section, first explains what happened as students received his or her essay.

As a method for investigating the expressive intonation of the written responses on the students' essays, determining the components of the change of speakers in the utterance and how the levels of finalization were satisfied in the speech genre, set the stage for an investigation into the expressive intonation of the initial utterance. The stimulated elicitation interviews provided a manner of exploring the process students engaged in while receiving feedback. For example, if the first thing a student did when receiving an essay back was to look at the grade before reading any of the comments,

then the utterance of the grade, either silently or verbally expressed, established the initial expressive intonation of the utterance and as Bakhtin (1986) suggested, that initial intonation will only be "differentiated through the speech process" (p. 79). This differentiation of the speech process involved the various connections made between the current live communicative act catalogued against the student's experiences with the utterances of the past:

> "[...] when we select words in the process of constructing an utterance, we by no means, always take them from the system of language in their neutral, dictionary form. We usually take them from *other utterances*, and mainly from utterances that are kindred to ours in genre, that is, in theme, composition, or style. In the genre the word acquires a particular typical expression." (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 87)

The analysis of the instructor's stimulated elicitation interview involved me noting body language, utterances, or characteristics the instructor demonstrated when the Think-Aloud recording of the instructor reading and commenting on the students' essays was played. I looked for patterns and themes between the instructor's comments in her language compared to the student's reaction to the instructor's comments as they read and vocalized the comments written by the instructor.

Think-Aloud Protocols

The instructor think-aloud protocols were transcribed using the transcription protocol suggested by Prior (2004). Each student provided me with an electronic copy of his or her essay and a photocopy of the essay Ms. Terry had commented on. The think-aloud protocols were transcribed in the electronic files of the students' essays, using the track changes function in MS Word, allowing me to insert Ms. Terry's comments on the recordings in proximity to the referential point on the student's essay. In addition, instances and variations between what was spoken on the recordings and what was written on the student's essays could also be collected.

The themes culled from the Think Aloud transcriptions were cross-referenced with the stimulated elicitation. At this time, I was aware of the amount of data that created from all of these different methods of collection, and the analysis of this material could be completely altered from the present discussion.

Limitations

The methodology of this study was a qualitative design, obtaining data from an informal participant-screening tool, think-aloud protocols from the instructor, classroom observations, two semi-structured interviews with the participants and the instructor, and stimulated elicitation interviews with the participants and the instructor. Each of the instruments added to the credibility and authenticity of the data; however, each one comes with some limitations. First, a limitation throughout all of the instruments was the possibility of a language barrier. Since first and second language learners of English were participants in the study, some of the instructions, activities, and questions may not have been clearly understood by the second language learners of English. On a different note, it was also possible that the nature of asking students to participate in a study may be culturally inappropriate or awkward for some of the participants. Any anxiety created as a result, could alter the environment of the study biasing the data or hindering the process of data collection. In addition, the participant-screening tool was created by me and at no point in time was it ever sent to a validation panel, making the data collected from it less reliable and calling into question the validity of the instrument at gathering the data that it was intended to collect.

As is the case in most qualitative studies, the findings were not generalizable to a larger population. However, many researchers have stated that generalizability in the

qualitative research is not really a limitation because the intent of a qualitative study is not to deduce patterns of behaviors that are reflective of the larger population. The origins of qualitative research from anthropology and sociology reflect the importance of thick description of the context of a study and not the applicability of the results to other groups.

Another limitation to the study was that the very nature of my involvement with the instructor as she engaged in the unnatural activity of a think-aloud protocol could possibly make the data questionable in regards to its validity. The instructor's comments may also be different based on the unusual nature of the think-aloud protocols used in the study. Think-aloud, protocols have a few limitations. The major limitation is the very act of asking students to voice their thoughts is a fabricated situation. There is no way to validate that the students are comfortable enough with the task, environment, researcher, and/or language skills, to comment on everything that they are thinking as they read (Brand, 1989).

An element of the methodology that was representative of the problem with many qualitative studies was the interpretation of intonation in the interviews. I did not utilize any form of inter-rater reliability. I chose not to do this because it would have hence called into question the very essence of Bakhtin's theory about the dialogic nature of communication as an unrepeatable utterance. Just as Heraclites of the pre-Socratic philosophers argued, "You can't step in the same river twice," listening to the interviews via the recording and the context of the moment in the process of the student's life and mine is not repeatable. Hours, events, thoughts, and countless other aspects of the moment have been washed away. Any attempt to step back into the river of the

conversation would be a different river. I could have had the students look over the interviews later and asked them to verify authenticity of the transcription, though.

The stimulated elicitation interview with each student as s/he received, read, and reacted to the comments was an artificial situation because the student and I were not in the classroom; we were in another classroom. My presence in the room also could have an impact on what the students did as s/he received his or her essay back. The first interpretation that I made based on my observations of the students' changed behavior was that the students might have altered his or her behavior because of my interaction with the students. My presence in the room during the stimulated elicitation interview when each student received his or her essay back could have altered the students' behavior. In each instance, I asked the participants if my presence influenced them when they viewed their process for reviewing their essays, and each one reported that they did not feel that my presence influenced their reaction. Additionally, since the end of the study in May 2006, each one of these students has been in another class with me, and each has reassured me that my presence had not influenced them. While these testimonies do not discredit the real possibility of an observation bias, it certainly leaves alternate interpretations open to investigation. In addition, since all of my research was based on literature that was also susceptible to similar limitations, my study's validity was equally as stable in the genre of interpreting written response in a qualitative study.

The fact that my study asked the students to talk about the comments on several occasions could also be seen as a limitation because the interviews themselves and the students acknowledgement of being a participant in a study would likely make them

spend more time, and approach the comments differently than if they had received them back in a "normal" class setting.

Protection of Human Subjects

Information collected from participants will remain confidential. I is the only person who had access to any of the personal information from the screening tools, listened to the recorded interviews or think-aloud sessions, read the transcriptions of the interviews and the think-aloud protocols. All audio files, transcriptions, screening tools and consent forms were kept in a locked filing cabinet in my basement. To ensure additional security, the electronic files of the transcripts and the password protected audio files were stored on an external hard drive which is additionally password protected and stored in the locked filing cabinet.

During the initial interview, each participant chose his or her own pseudonym. His or her name was not ever attached to the screening tool and the student was assured that the instructor never had access to this information. On the reverse side of the screening tool, I wrote a number. This number is correlated to a sheet of paper that has each student's name next to the number. The sheet of paper containing the student's name and the student's screening tool number will never be stored with the actual folder containing the screening tool.

I compiled a list of all participants and their chosen pseudonyms. The list containing the student's name and his or her pseudonyms and the demographic material collected in the initial screening tool was placed in a locked filing cabinet at my home. Once the list had been created, I made sure that both lists were not stored in the same location. I was the only person who had access to the files.

Research Environment

At the request of the administration of the college, the instructor of the course and the student participants in the study, the real name of the college has been changed to Fahey College, and each of the participants chose pseudonyms to replace his or her names in the findings of this study.

The setting of the study was a College Composition and Research course during the April 2006 quarter at Fahey College. The course met on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:50 a.m.-1:30 p.m. for eleven weeks beginning on April 20, 2006 and ending on July 6, 2006. The first day of the study was on Tuesday, April 25, 2006 and the last day of observations and interviews was on June 2, 2006.

Profile of the Researcher

I have been teaching a variety of College English Writing and Literature courses for over ten years. Currently, I am a full time English instructor at Fahey College. In addition, I have taught English Composition at the University of San Francisco for four years and the University of Arkansas for two semesters.

My interest in providing written feedback on students' essays began during my first teaching experience as a Teaching Assistant (TA) at the University of Arkansas where I was completing my MA in Comparative Literature with an emphasis on Spanish and Arabic. The title "Teaching Assistant" is a bit misleading at the University of Arkansas, for I was not an assistant to another professor; I was the only instructor for the two sections of English 1013 Freshmen Composition course. All TA's were required to take a course on teaching that was called Composition Pedagogy. Through this course, I was introduced to the theories of Elbow, Rose, Knoblauch and Brannon, Sommers,

Belanoff, Smith, Hairston, and others. As a Comparative Literature major, the courses I was enrolled in ranged from Arabic II: Advanced Conversation to Renaissance Women. Of course, all of the literature classes were heavily influenced by the big literary critics, like, Frederic Jameson, Foucault, Derrida, Fish, and, as it relates to the current investigation, Bakhtin. I was not that interested in Rhetoric and Composition, but my disinterest has proven to be more accurately described as ignorance of the field.

The research completed by composition researchers was interesting enough to read, but I felt that the studies were really geared towards people who wanted to improve their pedagogical craft. At the time, I was not interested in improving my teaching craft; I was trying to find my craft—any craft. I approached the TA position from a naïve angle—I learned it; I can teach it. After familiarizing myself with the education terminology and teaching methodology in the Composition Pedagogy class, I realized how wrong I was.

Providing written feedback was the quixotic craft that horrified yet fascinated me the most. I remember the first “batch” of student essays that came in to be “graded.” Our Composition Pedagogy instructor recommended a procedure for “grading” to all of the TA’s. He suggested that we read all of the essays without marking on them, putting them into piles according to our initial impression for a grade. After all the essays had been placed in “grade appropriate” piles, he instructed us to read the essays in each stack; making suggestions and corrections in the margins; and then write a holistic comment on the last page with the grade underneath. Simple, right?

The process took me about 35-40 hours to grade 22 essays. To make matters worse, I was not confident that my comments helped and even less comfortable with

assigning a grade. Did I count errors and deduct points for each one? How many points for each? Do I even need to use points? Just use a letter grade—makes it seem less scientific. Do I deduct the same amount for a faulty pronoun/antecedent agreement as for a paragraph lacking coherence? I was lost!

To compensate for this insecurity, I decided to write at the bottom of each essay, “Please come and see me if you have any questions.” To my horror, when I handed them back, students looked at the grade, some looked at the comments, some appeared to read the comments, some put them in their bags, some put them in the trash as they left the class, and not one of them came to me with questions.

That was in 1995, 12 years ago. Since then, I graduated from University of Arkansas, moved to San Francisco, began teaching fulltime at Fahey College, started the doctoral program at University of San Francisco, got married, bought a house, witnessed the birth of my daughter, Isabel, in July of 2004, and at the moment am anxiously awaiting the birth of my son, Eamonn, in April of 2007. I am extremely happy with my life, but I still anguish over writing comments on a student’s essay.

The current research topic began churning through my head after I had a conference with a student about three years ago. I knew when I handed the essay back to her that she was upset, and in the one–on–one conference with her, I found out why she was upset. In the conference, I asked her to read one of my comments aloud to me, and I was rather shocked at her tone of voice. I asked her to continue reading and when she was finished reading all of my comments on her essay, she had read at least 75% of my comments in a tone of voice that was completely different from the way I intended the comment to be intonated. She and I talked about our different readings of the comments

for quite some time; we could see how the other's interpretation was viable given a different intonation, but…why there was there such a chasm of intonational difference? We did not arrive at an explanation for the miscommunication; hence, the reason for my current investigation. Since that time, I have noticed that the tone of voice is employed in different ways in different situations between different individuals.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

> Yet, precisely because both teacher feedback and student processing of feedback can be so idiosyncratic, it is important to consider as much data as possible from as many subjects (teachers and students) as feasible to arrive at any useful conclusions. Teacher researchers need to seek ways to better contextualize their investigations, but still collect adequate amounts of data. (Ferris, 2003, pp. 34-35)

Chapter IV provides responses to the three research questions. The first section presents the findings for the first research question on Ms. Terry's general attitudes and specific expectations about her written comments on L1 and L2 students' essays. The next section addresses the second research question on L1 and L2 students' attitudes and expectations of their instructors' written comments. The final section presents the findings from the third research question on how the expressive intonation of Ms. Terry's written comments were interpreted by the L1 and L2 students.

In this study, the term "attitude" was operationally defined as the formation of an individual's understanding of written comments based on that individual's past experiences with written comments. "Expectations" was defined as how an individual's "attitude" is reinforced or altered based on his or her experience and relationship with a new student or instructor prior to providing or receiving feedback in the form of written comments.

Research Question #1:

What Are Ms. Terry's General Attitudes about Written Response and Specific Expectations about Her Written Response on L1 and L2 Students' Essays?

The findings for this research question first present Ms. Terry's general attitudes towards written response, connecting how her attitudes toward her commenting process developed from her own experiences as an instructor. The second half of this section's

findings present her expectations about her written comments for L1 and L2 students. Following this section is a brief overview of the similarities and differences of her expectations for L1 and L2 students. The final section for the first research question summarizes the similarities and differences between her attitudes and expectations for written comments on L1 and L2 students' essays.

Ms. Terry's Attitudes about Written Response: Attitudes Informing Practice

Ms. Terry's 30+ years of teaching experience aided the development of her own practical written response system. Her ultimate goal as an instructor was to improve her students' grammar. She felt that students were most receptive to improving their grammar when they were in a positive environment, and connected to their instructors and their own work.

The most prominent attitude about the written response process for Ms. Terry was that it was not a separate activity from instruction in the classroom. Ms. Terry believed that all too often the instruction in the classroom and the written response process were thought of as separate tasks. For her, the activities in the classroom must work in concert with the written response provided after the completion of a writing assignment. Ms. Terry's attitude was that feedback did not begin with the instructor reading the essay and providing comments, but rather began with the instructor-student interaction as the essay was being developed. Therefore, the organizational structure of this section follows Ms. Terry's interaction with the L1 and L2 students beginning when the assignment was distributed to the class and ending when she returned the graded writing assignment to the student.

Ms. Terry's attitude about written response began with the manner in which the assignment was explained to the students. Ms. Terry believed that students needed to have very specific instructions when introduced to an assignment. Her assignment prompt provided students with a basic explanation of the assignment's topic, length, stylistic requirements, a chronological list of required parts, and a breakdown of the grading criteria. She found that even though using a rubric made it easier for her to provide consistent, specific, and efficient responses, she still felt that students had a hard time understanding how her written responses equated to a certain point value.

For Ms. Terry, the primary reason for this misunderstanding was a poor student-instructor relationship. The importance of the instructor-student relationship compelled her to use one-on-one instructor-student conferences to bridge the gap. She felt that having one-on-one conferences with each student allowed her and the student to understand one another better. In order to facilitate these conferences, Ms. Terry began using peer-editing workshops so students remained focused while she conducted her conferences.

During these conferences, Ms. Terry went over each student's essay with him/her, and she expected the students to use her comments to understand both what the student had done correctly and to identify which grammatical and structural errors to correct on future drafts. Ms. Terry felt that this approach increased the likelihood that students would understand what they needed to work on before they submitted their final essays.

As an additional supporting measure for the students, Ms. Terry also felt that students must have time in class to work not only on revising the draft, but also to have access to her for questions during that stage of the writing process. She felt that providing

the time in class for students to ask questions specific to their essays improved the instructor-student relationship.

Once the essays were submitted by the students, Ms. Terry had a written response process she followed. She believed it was very important to read through and comment on all of the essays in one sitting. Ms. Terry proposed that reading all of the students' essays in one sitting reduced the chance for inconsistency in her written responses. She felt that reading a few a day over a longer period, while easier on the instructor's schedule, was a dangerous practice because it was harder to be consistent in calculating the grade.

In addition, she also explained that it was very important to read every essay at least twice and preferably three times to ensure consistency in her commenting. She explained that through the in-class conferences with each student plus the reading of the essays outside of the classroom she read the essays multiple times, adding to the consistency of her comments and grade determination during the final reading.

She added that during the first reading for content, she tried not to make too many comments, and she never made comments before she had read the entire paragraph at least twice. She believed that she needed to, "[…] get a feel for what's going on" in a paragraph before she responded. The potential of misunderstanding a student's topic was greater if she was writing responses before she finished reading the paragraph.

When she did begin to respond, she tried to include comments that praised what the student had done well and identified areas for the student to improve. Ms. Terry felt that too often instructors neglected to reinforce what the student had done well and only

pointed out student errors. She believed there was always a positive that could be celebrated.

Ms. Terry tried to keep a balance between praise and criticism; however, she was very adamant that under no circumstances did she overlook an error because she could not balance it with an exemplary point. Ms. Terry felt it was the instructor's professional obligation to mark every grammatical or stylistic error. She believed that the students were inexperienced with proper grammar because of curriculum changes over the past twenty years that had deemphasized the teaching of grammar in schools.

When Ms. Terry was ready to respond to a grammatical error, she considered editorial symbols, writing in-line with the error, and accompanied by a one or two word response in the margin, to be the most efficient way to provide a response. In addition, she also thought that comments about content and structure needed to be brief yet informative so not as to overwhelm the student. She believed that she had already established an open line of communication with the students during the conferences, so if they wanted a more detailed explanation about her responses, they were comfortable enough to ask for an explanation. She felt that a conversation was a much more efficient and effective way to explain grammar and structural issues than to attempt to write a full explanation in the margins.

Ms. Terry's final written response task was to write the end comment and determine the student's grade for the essay. In her experience, the end comment needed to provide general statements about the whole essay. It always began with a positive comment about the essay's strengths and then addressed some of the areas for improvement. At least one sentence identified grammatical areas that the student needed

to work on for the next essay assignment, and she felt it was important to end with a sentence that reinforced the student-instructor relationship by making a direct reference to some topic raised either in the essay or in the conference.

Ms. Terry's Expectations about Her Written Response on L1 and L2 Students' Essays

> What is the purpose of written comments? [Question #1 on Participant Screening Tool]
>
> Ms. T**:** Improving students' writing skills on future papers.

In the course of the study, Ms. Terry implied that there was a difference in how she modified her written responses given her knowledge about a student's English proficiency. Based on her extensive experience as an ESL instructor, she had different expectations about how L1 and L2 students would react to her written responses.

Ms. Terry's Expectations about Her Written Responses on L1 Students' Essays

From Ms. Terry's perspective, most L1 students had few positive experiences with writing classes. Ms. Terry felt that L1 students would appreciate comments that praised their work; in many cases, she assumed that they had never received comments that praised them as writers. However, she also expected that the majority of comments would be about grammar. She had observed a trend over the past few years that L1 students were usually much weaker on grammar than with organization and content. Furthermore, she anticipated that the L1 students expected comments on grammar, and she worried that if there were not grammar corrections on their essay, they would assume that the instructor did not read the essay carefully. For this reason, overlooking a grammatical error on a L1 student's essay was never acceptable to Ms. Terry. As long as she made sure to include a few positive comments when appropriate, she did not feel that L1 students would be overwhelmed by the number of comments on grammar.

Ms. Terry's content and grammar comments were distinguished by the location of the comment on the page. Content comments were typically placed in the end comment and were holistic in scope. Grammar comments were placed at the point of the error with the corrected word or punctuation mark inserted between the lines and a line drawn to the margin for a definition of the editorial comment. Ms. Terry expected the L1 students to understand editorial marks and symbols. She defended the use of the editorial marks, explaining that students knew what the comment asked them to do because she always wrote a type of legend or key in the margin explaining the meaning of the editorial mark (i.e. ^= insert).

Ms. Terry also expected to write few detailed explanations for grammar or content problems on L1 students' essays. In the past, she had written extensive explanations for grammatical problems and found that regardless of whether she wrote an explanation or not, she still had to explain the grammatical concept to L1 students individually.

This same attention to language usage for L1 students was also noted in her discussion of the end comment. Ms. Terry always wrote the end comment after the last paragraph, beginning with a positive statement about the essay. The end comments tended to be holistic summations of the overall effectiveness of the essay towards the assignment's stated objective. If she addressed grammar issues in the end comment, she did so with general statements phrased in an encouraging manner.

Ms. Terry's Expectations about Her Written Response on L2 Students' Essays

When Ms. Terry had the opportunity to respond to L2 students, she used the same process and style, but modified the delivery and the emphasis of her responses. As with

L1 students, she did not limit her grammatical corrections, however, she was more selective in giving comments on content.

Ms. Terry did not limit the number of comments on grammar on L2 students' essays because she felt they needed the constant review. In her experience, if an error on an essay was not marked or corrected, the students would then repeat this mistake in future essays. While she did not limit grammatical corrections, she did limit the length of the comments on grammar by replacing a detailed explanation with more direct statements such as "insert a comma" or "wrong verb tense." She did not provide any explanation as to why the comma or verb needed correction to encourage students to look up the explanations for an error or come and request help.

Her general process for commenting reflected her awareness of the power of the visual stimulus of a student essay with many written comments. She was confident that L2 students were more affected by comments praising their language accomplishments than if the same comment were made for an L1 student. From her experience learning languages herself, she knew that she always felt better when a native speaker identified an improvement in her language skills. To better encourage the L2 students in her classes, she always included several marginal comments that complimented the student on an improved or unique sentence. In general, Ms. Terry limited the number of comments on global issues of content and organization because she worried that an excess of written comments on content would discourage L2 students. She used this same sensitivity for her end comment as with her content comments.

> Ms. T: I do write some comments in the margins, not huge numbers and I always write something at the end, which I try to make both positive [laughing] and helpful—constructive. Always, there is a positive somewhere.

She chose her words carefully, avoiding jargon specific terms that the L2 student may not know. This attention to word selection was of primary importance in the end comment, for she felt that it would be the last thing the students would read and as such needed to be encouraging and motivational.

Similarities and Differences about Ms. Terry's Expectations for Written Responses to L1 and L2 students

As mentioned earlier, Ms. Terry felt compelled to use comments praising both L1 and L2 students' writing because she believed that her students were very easily discouraged. She found that L2 students needed this type of positive reinforcement more than L1 students did. Her approach to writing comments praising the student only differed from L1 to L2 students by the language she would use. She felt that there was such a wealth of diversity in her students at Fahey College that she needed to be aware of how her words might be misinterpreted. As a precaution, she steered clear of idiomatic expressions and clichés that might be misunderstood. For example, she mentioned that one student was confused when she wrote, "You nailed it!" next to a particularly complex concept. The student did not understand the phrase and felt that any reference to a carpenter's tool meant that s/he had done something wrong and that s/he should be a carpenter and not a college student.

Ms. Terry felt that in the past she spent the majority of her time commenting on grammar on L1 and L2 students' essays. She expected that the L1 students would interpret the absence of grammar responses as a statement about her inability to correct grammar, that she did not read the essay, or even worse, that she did not care about helping the students improve his or her writing skills. She felt L2 students would assume

that everything without a comment was correct and she feared that she would reinforce incorrect grammar. In the actual practice of commenting, she did not withhold any grammatical comments from either L1 or L2 students' essays. Ms. Terry believed that correcting grammar was paramount to responsible commenting because both L1 and L2 students "have not learned proper grammar." She expected to write many more grammatical comments on L2 students' essays than on L1 students' essays.

Ms. Terry felt that both L1 students and L2 students often reacted negatively to content comments. She believed that students often interpreted content comments about organization or development as statements about how the instructor felt about the student personally. This was especially true when the topic was very personal to the student. When L1 and L2 students wrote about a topic that was personal, Ms. Terry was conscientious about how it might be interpreted, so she limited her content comments to brief sentences and/or statements written in the margin next to the area in question. She noted that the only difference between her marginal comments on L1 and L2 student essays was the vocabulary she used, avoiding composition jargon like "transition" and using appropriate terminology like "connection" for L2 students.

Summary of Research Question #1

Ms. Terry's approach to providing written response on both L1 and L2 students' essays demonstrated how the attitudes she had developed through her years of teaching had been supplemented by practical application and continuous modification of her written response practice. Her commenting style encouraged students to interact not only with her through their instructor-student conferences, but also with each other in peer editing workshops.

The conferences she set up with students were designed so she could get to know her students better. When she needed to respond to their writing, she felt a stronger connection with who they were and what their strengths were. In addition, she also felt that in higher education, instructors were often placed on a pedestal by students, making the instructors seem unapproachable. Her goal with her classroom instruction and conferencing sessions was to remove that pedestal, so that the students would feel comfortable talking to her about their writing.

In particular, she felt that L2 students would benefit more from these conferences because one-on-one instruction allowed her to home in on the student's language ability. She felt that she could then use her ESL training to cater more to that student's needs in both her in-class lessons and her written responses. For L1 students, the conference offered an opportunity to discuss his or her essay with the instructor. She felt that it would also allow her to demystify her commenting process by reading over the students' essays with them.

She used rubrics and editorial comments to improve her ability to respond to students' writing with specific grading criteria and efficiency. Her insistence on using editorial comments allowed her to streamline the response process while simultaneously introducing students to a skill that she felt would benefit them in their careers.

To aid in her ability to provide both written and verbal responses to students' writing, she allocated class time for students to work on his or her writing assignments. During these sessions, she was available to answer questions and provide individual tutoring on grammar and writing techniques.

In her end comments, she tried to be balanced in providing comments that both addressed issues of style and grammar and ended with praise or a comment that referenced some aspect from the conference or in-class writing session (i.e. "Thanks for coming to see me for help with commas").

Research Question #2: What Are Community College Native Speaking (L1) and Second Language Learner (L2) Community College English Composition Students' Attitudes and Expectations about Instructors' Written Comments on Their Essays?

The first section describes the attitudes each L1 and L2 student had developed as a result of past instructors' written responses to his or her essays. The second section discusses the expectations each L1 and L2 student had for Ms. Terry's written responses on his or her essay. The final section summarizes the similarities and differences between the L1 and L2 students' attitudes and expectations.

L1 Students' Attitudes toward English Writing Instructors' Written Responses

Tatiana's Attitude about Instructors' Written Response

Tatiana's attitude about written response was formed through numerous experiences throughout her years of schooling. Based on these experiences, Tatiana felt that her previous instructors typically read each student's essay once, writing comments mostly on grammar and punctuation as they read. Tatiana described three locations where the comments were typically found: in the margin, between the lines or over her own writing, and/or in a summary note on the last page of the essay. Following this summary note, the student's grade was usually written as a numerical score out of one hundred possible points. Tatiana's attitude toward this grading system was one of wonderment

because she could not determine how many points were deducted for each comment and whether some comments equated to a larger deduction than others.

Tatiana expressed frustration with this subjective grading style. She deduced that because each grammar correction marked a specific error, there must be a certain point value for various grammatical errors. However, since the few comments she received about content did not specify a single incident, they must have some other value. Throughout her previous education and experience, she had almost no memory of content ever being addressed in written response. The corrections she recalled from the past focused exclusively on grammar and punctuation, not on her content, and never included an explanation of the identified grammatical error.

Over the course of this study, Tatiana's attitude about written response became more positive, and she cited how a recent instructor provided suggestions, guidelines, and praise about her essay's content and organization. Even though Tatiana liked receiving more reader-based, positive comments about the instructor's reaction to her essay, she stated that she would not be upset if she did not have these comments on her returned essay: "It is nice to know the instructor liked my ideas, but grammar comments is what will help me become a better writer."

Tassianna's Attitude about Instructors' Written Response

Tassianna had a very thorough opinion of her prior instructors' processes for writing responses to her essays was very thorough. As she thought back on specific assignments, she felt confident that only one of her instructors read the essays more than once before handing them back to the students. In most cases, she expected that the instructor, given his or her course load, returned the essays within a week of being

submitted. She recalled that there were usually about 15 to 20 grammar comments in a three-page essay, and that these comments identified the grammatical errors either by crossing out the error or writing the correction between the lines.

She recalled that the explanatory comments that focused on grammar and punctuation were typically located in the margin. Tassianna noted the purpose for the marginal notes was to identify and occasionally explain grammatical problems, but these comments were never detailed. Tassianna appreciated the grammar suggestions on her work because to her grammar was the instructor's primary reason for writing comments on her essays.

Nonetheless, Tassianna did not feel that grammar was the only component that instructors looked at while reading students' essays. Tassianna also identified content, structure, organization, and transitions as significant additional criteria used by her instructors when determining grades. Even though she acknowledged the existence of additional criteria, she felt confident that grammar was weighted more than any of the other criteria.

The comments written at the end of the essay were the most personally gratifying for Tassianna. Tassianna felt that the end comments were, "the true voice of the instructor as a reader, not an instructor." Whether there were 5 comments or 100 comments, as long as at least one of the comments provided a reaction showing some interest or engagement with her topic, Tassianna was satisfied.

L2 Students' Attitudes toward English Writing Instructors' Written Responses

Ida's Attitude about Instructors' Written Responses

Ida's attitude about instructors' comments was formed by her experiences growing up in China. During her education in China, she felt that one week was the amount of time it should take for an instructor to return essays to the class; however, she acknowledged that in China it would sometimes be a month before they were returned. She attributed the difference in return time to the number of grammatical errors on the essays.

Ida had a rigid theory about how a grade was determined. She believed that the only criteria used for the calculation of a grade was grammar. She supported this claim with several instances from her past where she remembered only receiving grammar comments on her essays. From her earliest memory of writing in school, Ida always received essays back with circles, x's, and check marks identifying the location of a grammatical error on her essay assignments. Ida noted that since these marks did little more than identify where an error had been found she did not consider them instructional comments, but simply marks to identify an error. Had she received comments from her instructors in China, Ida stated that she would not be upset by how many comments were written on the essay. She felt that there was no such thing as too many comments as long as the comments provided clear explanations of the problem and how to correct the error.

Ida had not formed a clear attitude about marginal comments since she had never experienced this style of commenting. In China, the instructors did not write anything in the margins. Grammatical errors were identified in red ink, but never commented on nor corrected. The more red marks on an essay, the lower the grade. The grade was always written in red, on the last page, and accompanied by an end comment. Ida explained that the end comment was a very short one to two sentence paragraph, listing grammatical

problems and making an evaluative statement about the student's writing, like, "Not good writing, do better," or "Many mistakes, work harder." Ida disliked these comments because she did not know why something was wrong nor how to correct it.

Ida believed the purpose of the responses from the instructor was to help her with grammar, but she did not expect to receive comments about her subject matter or her organization. Ida's writing instructors in China did not comment on the content nor the structure of her work as everyone had the same topic and set structure to follow. In China, she received written response to her writing, but comments were exclusively a one-way communication from instructor to student. There was not a process during the class where participants were asked to bring in drafts, nor was there the opportunity for revision. As Ida phrased it, "Turn it in; get it back; forget about it."

Paul's Attitude about Instructors' Written Response

Paul did not have many positive memories about his childhood years in English classes. In elementary and high school, English classes, when the instructor started talking about something he did not understand he said he would "change the channel to something else…like reading my football play book." In college however, he had a different solution. Paul stated that, "I just kept dropping out of the English classes because I just didn't understand anything the English teachers were talking about." As a result of these experiences, Paul did not feel like he had enough experience in English classes to feel comfortable or competent.

Paul's attitude toward the amount of time an instructor would take before returning an essay reflected his frustration with school. Paul explained:

> I care more about the grade than I do about getting my own paper back. I look at the goal… I want to get a good grade; not I want to get my paper back, read the feedback. I am more focused on the final product-- the final grade.

When he did receive an essay back, Paul recalled how his past instructors returned the paper a week after its due date depending on the class size, and that the comments focused exclusively on grammar. Paul believed that the more of these comments were on his essay the worse he did on the assignment.

Paul believed the purpose of marginal notes was primarily to identify and occasionally correct grammatical problems. Paul also stated that both marginal and end comments had been used in responding to his work in the past. His understanding was that the marginal comments focused on grammar and the end comment gave a holistic overview of what was grammatically wrong with his writing. He clarified this by explaining that the marginal comments are like having a direct conversation between him and the instructor. To Paul, the end comment gave the instructor's overall impression of "what was wrong with [his] writing."

He noted that almost all of the comments were corrections and that he did not think, "[instructors] engaged with his topic." He did not recall any comments ever mentioning his topic, organization or how well he had developed his ideas. In fact, the corrections that he did remember usually just crossed out the error, showing the correction written above or below the grammatical error, without explanation for why the correction was needed.

Attitudes about Instructors' Written Response:

Similarities and Differences between L1 and L2 Students

There were a few interesting differences between the L1 and L2 students' attitudes about the number of times an instructor would read an essay before returning it

to the students. Tatiana and Tassianna had similar attitudes both suggesting that their instructors read the essays once though acknowledging the possibility of a second reading. In contrast, Ida and Paul were certain that instructors from their past only read the essay one time, writing their grammatical corrections as they read the student's essay.

Tatiana, Tassianna, and Ida's attitudes about the anticipated return time for an essay was approximately one week from its due date. Both Tatiana and Tassianna acknowledged that the return time was dependent upon variables like the number of students in the class, the number of courses the instructor was teaching, and the length of the essays. Paul, on the other hand, did not care if the essay was ever returned to him as long as he knew his grade within about two weeks from the date it was submitted. He felt his instructors had never written responses that acknowledged his writing, so he decided that the comments were not important.

Both L1 and L2 groups identified different criteria for calculating the grade, however, all of the participants identified grammar as the most important or heavily weighted criteria for determining a student's grade. (See Table 2)

Table 2: L1 and L2 Students' Attitudes and Expectations about Grading Criteria, Number of Times Read by Instructor, and Instructor's Commenting Process

Written Comment Category	Attitudes / Expectations	L1 Students: Tatiana	L1 Students: Tassianna	L2 Students: Ida	L2 Students: Paul
How Instructor Calculates Grade Ms. Terry's Actual Criteria 1. Content 40 2. Organization 30 3. Grammar 10 4. Capitalization & Punctuation 10 5. Outline 10	Attitudes	Grammar then maybe topic and thesis statement	Grammar is most important, but content, structure, organization, and transitions are also considered	Grammar only	Grammar only Never Content
	Expectations	Grammar is most important then content	Grammar (especially punctuation) Content Organization	Grammar only (especially commas)	Grammar Content Word Choice
Number of Times Instructor Reads Essay	Attitudes	Once maybe twice	Once, maybe twice	Once	Once
	Expectations	Three	Two, maybe three	Once	Two consecutive readings
Process Instructor uses in Writing Comments	Attitudes	1. Read and corrected grammar 2. Wrote grade and end comment 3. Possible Second Reading	1. Grammar first 2. Then content 3. Read again	1. Read and correct grammar 2. Write grade at the end	1. Correct grammar 2. Write final comment and grade
	Expectations	1. Read every essay without making comments 2. Read every essay commenting on Grammar 3. Read entire class commenting on content	1. Read essay commenting on grammar and give grade 2. Read essay again commenting on content 3. Third reading would only occur if instructor was reading for artistic appreciation	1. Read and correct grammar 2. Write Grade at end	1. Read first time for grammar 2. Read second time for comments on content, overall comment at the end and grade.

Both the L1 and L2 students believed grammar was the primary criteria used to determine the grade. One of the interesting aspects of these findings was the participants'

attitudes about why instructors focused on grammar more than on other aspects of their writing. All four of them felt that good grammar meant good writing, and believed that the number of grammatical errors on an essay was the key indicator of their grade. Whereas Ida believed grammar should be the sole factor, Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul all believed content to be an additional contributor to their grades.

L1 Students' Expectations for Ms. Terry's Written Responses

Tatiana's Expectations about Ms. Terry's Written Response

Tatiana recalled Ms. Terry saying in class that she reads students' essays three times before returning them. Tatiana quoted Ms. Terry as saying, "I just don't catch everything after one reading." Tatiana recalled that Ms. Terry's grading process involved reading all of the essays once without writing comments, followed by a reread where she commented on grammar only, and a third reading where she commented on content and determined the final grade.

Tatiana's expectations for Ms. Terry's return time were conscientious of factors that could affect the return time. Tatiana expected Ms. Terry would have the papers back within a week because she had always done so in the past class, but she would understand if it took longer than that because she had read many long essays in the peer review sessions from other students, and that Ms. Terry had "a lot of other really big classes this quarter."

In regards to her expectations for Ms. Terry's method for determining a grade, Tatiana stated that grammar would be the most heavily weighted category to determine the grade, but that she knew content would also be used in the final tabulation. Tatiana

referred to the grade criteria scale that Ms. Terry provided to the class, however, she did not remember the categories or if all categories were weighted equally.

Tatiana's perception on how she would react to seeing many comments on her essay had changed. Tatiana had received numerous comments from Ms. Terry in her first English class at Fahey College, but she did not have a negative response even though Ms. Terry had commented all over her paper. As an explanation for this change in her attitude, Tatiana suggested she was not overwhelmed stating, "I could talk to [Ms. Terry] in class, and she had time to answer my specific questions in class, so I knew what she meant."

Tatiana specifically stated that during the current study, she had received mostly comments about grammar during her conference with Ms. Terry. However, Ms. Terry also praised her for the development of her topic and use of humor in the narrative. She expected that Ms. Terry would look for grammatical errors in her essay, but since Ms. Terry had already read and corrected the grammar in the conference, she probably only had comments on content and structure on her final essay.

Tassianna's Expectations about Ms. Terry's Written Responses

Tassianna felt certain that Ms. Terry would read each essay at least twice, and maybe a third time. Tassianna expected that Ms. Terry would read each essay in two consecutive readings, commenting on grammar during the first reading, and then on content during the second reading. The third reading for Tassianna would only occur if the instructor were so engaged in the topic that s/he wanted to "appreciate the essay's artistic qualities."

Tassianna also acknowledged that Ms. Terry had many classes that quarter and that as a result, she may not be able to get the essays back in a week. In addition, Tassianna also acknowledged that the return time may take longer because many of the students had written essays that were longer than the suggested page length on the assignment sheet. Tassianna felt that grammar would be the most heavily weighted category in determining the grade, but she knew content was also on the grading criteria scale that Ms. Terry had provided to the class. However, she was unable to recall what percentage of the grade was based on grammar. Tassianna also conveyed a more relaxed approach to the idea of receiving an essay back from Ms. Terry. She expected Ms. Terry to write a lot of comments, and Tassianna would only become concerned about her grade on the essay if she noticed that there were numerous corrections of her grammar and punctuation.

Tassianna expected Ms. Terry to look for grammatical errors first. She expected the instructor to do this first because her job was to help a student improve as a writer and improving a student's grammar was the first step in that process. After the grammar was corrected, Tassianna thought "that [Ms. Terry] earned or reserved the right to comment about the artistic-ness [sic] or the structure of the paper for when she actually grades it." Before an instructor provided feedback on the content of an essay, to Tassianna, she first commented on the grammar. It was not so much that Ms. Terry established credibility as an authentic evaluator, but that Ms. Terry was invested in helping the student and was not going to comment just on what the student needed to add, delete, or move. The instructor established a vehicle for communication through grammar before they gave advice about the much more personal and subjective aspects of the student's writing.

L2 Students' Expectations for Ms. Terry's Written Responses

Ida's Expectations about Ms. Terry's Written Responses

Ida's expectation of Ms. Terry's commenting method was the same as her attitude toward her past instructors. She felt that Ms. Terry would read the essays one time, correcting grammatical errors only. Ida did not recall any handout that gave the grading criteria for the essay, and she did not expect to receive any comments from Ms. Terry about her content. Ida explained that she expected the assignment would be returned in a week because Ms. Terry returned homework quickly in a previous class. However, Ida also acknowledged that Ms. Terry may need longer than a week because the class was relatively large and she knew there were several other students whose English was as "poor-level" as her own.

Even though Ida had proofread her essay multiple times herself and had her friend proofread it three additional times, she knew that Ms. Terry would still find grammatical errors. She expected Ms. Terry to provide detailed explanations on how to correct the errors. She mentioned that she hoped that Ms. Terry would only comment on grammar, because she did not need comments about the content or the organization for two reasons. First, she had actually written this essay in Chinese first and then translated it into English, so she felt that the organization was fine. Second, she expressed a strong dislike of the narrative rhetorical strategy, which she felt had no relevance to her pursuit of an Accounting degree, so any comments on the content would not be beneficial to her improving her English writing ability.

Paul's Expectations about Ms. Terry's Written Responses

Paul felt that Ms. Terry would give each essay two consecutive readings, commenting on grammar during the first reading, and writing an end comment and the grade after the second reading. Paul also had different expectations of Ms. Terry's estimated return time. Paul thought that in order for Ms. Terry to spend the time going through the essays with a "fine-toothed comb" as she had done in a Business class Paul had with her, the essays would be returned in about a week.

Although Paul did remember receiving the grading criteria on a handout, he could not remember what categories besides grammar were used. He felt confident that each category would have an equal weight toward the final grade. Paul explained that although he had not received many comments from his past instructors, he expected to have a substantial number of comments from Ms. Terry. While he admitted that he might initially feel that he had done poorly if he saw many comments on his essay, he was confident that her comments would be respectful and fair.

Paul's expectations about Ms. Terry's responses were drastically different from his attitude toward the responses from his previous instructors. He expected Ms. Terry would focus both on grammar and on the content since that is what they had gone over in the one-on-one conference. Based on his experience in the conference, he knew that she would comment equally on grammatical issues and on content and organization. He stated that he was interested in receiving her feedback because he felt that she respected him and his ideas, and he wanted to see what she thought of his revisions.

Similarities and Differences between L1 and L2 Students' Expectations

The L1 and L2 students all expected Ms. Terry to provide quite a few comments on each student's essay. They were also confident that these written responses would not

only identify errors, but also provide detailed explanations for how the student could improve his or her writing skills. All four students asserted that Ms. Terry would focus on grammar in her written responses. Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul all concluded that Ms. Terry would also provide feedback about the content and organization of their respective essays. Ida, on the other hand, felt confident that grammar would be Ms. Terry's only focus in her written responses.

In addition, Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul believed that Ms. Terry would read each essay at least twice and that each reading session would focus on different categories of commenting: grammar, content, and organization. Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul expected Ms. Terry to read the essays the first time responding to issues of grammar, and that the second reading would involve Ms. Terry providing feedback on the students' content and organization. Ida believed that Ms. Terry would only read the essay once and that she would focus all of her responses on grammatical issues. All of the students believed that Ms. Terry would consider grammar the largest category for determining the grade.

Summary of Research Question #2

> …[T]he unique speech experience of each individual is shaped and developed in continuous and constant interaction with others' individual utterances.…Our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works) is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of "our-own-ness," varying degrees of awareness and detachment. These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 89)

When comparing the L1 and L2 students' attitudes and expectations of how instructors calculated grades, the most unifying commonality was that all of the students identified grammar as having the greatest weight in the students' grades. Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul reported subtly different expectations from Ms. Terry than what they had explained when discussing his or her attitudes. Ida's attitude that grammar was the

only criteria for determining a grade remained the same for how she expected Ms. Terry to calculate her grade. Her only alteration was to suggest that Ms. Terry placed more specific emphasis on correct comma usage than any of Ida's previous instructors had.

Paul's expectation changed the most from his experiences with past instructors. Paul's attitude from his experiences initially was similar to Ida's in that grammar was the central criteria for calculating a student's grade. However, Paul expected that Ms. Terry would not limit her responses to grammar exclusively, and he anticipated that she would include written responses on his content.

Another interesting comparison was the L1 and L2 students' memories about the rather detailed grading criteria Ms. Terry had included on the Narrative Assignment prompt (See Appendix B). Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul acknowledged the distribution of the grading criteria although none of them could correctly identify all of the criteria. Furthermore, while grammar was weighted as only 10 points of the 100 total possible, Tatiana and Tassianna expected grammar to be a higher percentage of the overall grade. Ida expected grammar to be the only criteria, and Paul believed that grammar, content, and organization would all be weighted equally.

Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul expected Ms. Terry to include both grammar and content comments, citing the instructor-student in-class conference each had with Ms. Terry as support for this expectation. In the conferences, Ms. Terry read Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul's essays twice. In her first reading, she pointed out grammatical problems and provided explanations to each student and in the second reading, she commented on each student's content, transitions, and use of good descriptive adjectives. Ida, who did not have a one-on-one conference with Ms. Terry, did not expect a single

comment on content or structure. She thought Ms. Terry would focus on grammar because the content was not important.

The L1 and L2 students had similar attitudes about having received many written responses on their essays from past instructors. All four of the students admitted that they would initially assume they had performed poorly if they saw multiple comments written on their essays. There was not any real unifying explanation for the reactions to the number of comments directly, however, Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul all expressed a considerably less apprehensive attitude toward receiving comments from Ms. Terry. In all three instances, Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul referenced their one-on-one conference with Ms. Terry prior to submitting the assignment as justification for the change. Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul each specifically cited how the conferences made them feel more comfortable with Ms. Terry because they were able to get immediate feedback from her and ask questions. This does not suggest that Ida did not also feel comfortable with Ms. Terry because although she had also had a previous class with Ms. Terry, Ida did not meet with Ms. Terry for a one-on-one conference.

Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul all identified a third type of comment: the intralinear comment. These intralinear corrections were instances where the instructor added, deleted, or altered some of the participant's writing between the lines of the essay. For Tassianna and Tatiana, the intralinear comment was the tool used by the instructor to correct grammatical mistakes in the essay. However, they did not consider these marks to be marginal comments or any other type of comment—they were just corrections. To Tassianna a comment implied some type of feedback that the student had the ability to interpret as praise, criticism, advice, or a question. The comment in the margin allowed

the student to assume some type of a responsive role toward the comment, whereas the intralinear comment was solely an imperative. Intralinear corrections were the medium for the instructor to communicate the established rules of grammar. The instructor was the expert in regards to grammar, and there was very little room for interpretation when it came to making grammatical corrections. While Ida also identified the intralinear comments as noting grammatical rules, she did not interject any explanation because these types of comments were identical to the comments she had received during her school years in China.

Research Question #3:

How Is the Expressive Intonation of the Instructor's Written Comments Interpreted by the Two Distinct Groups of Students?

Expressive Intonation in Written Response

> ...when the listener perceives and understands the meaning (the language meaning) of speech, [s/] he simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it. [S/] He either agrees or disagrees with it (completely or partially), augments it, applies it, prepares for its execution, and so on. And the listener adopts this responsive attitude for the entire duration of the process of listening and understanding, from the very beginning-sometimes literally from the speaker's first word. (Bakhtin, 1986, p.68)

In the study, the students' interpretation of the instructor's expressive intonation in the written response began with the students receiving their essay back from the instructor. This moment represented Bakhtin's (1986) initial marker of an utterance or the change of speakers. At this point, the students went through the identification process Bakhtin (1986) termed finalization (p. 78), where the student changes from listener/reader to speaker/writer. Once transitioned to the role of the speaker/writer, for Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul, expressive intonation was determined by their current relationship with Ms. Terry, as developed through the one-on-one conferences. Ida's

expressive intonation, lacking the conference relationship, instead drew upon her experience with past instructors.

L1 and L2 Self-Reported Essay Review Process

L1 self-reported essay review process. In both of the semi-structured interviews, Tatiana reported turning to the last page and looking at the grade first before reading the end comment. Next, she would return to the first page and read the marginal comments. Tassianna had a slightly different approach to reviewing comments from her instructors. She preferred to turn to the last page to read the end comment and looked at the grade second. Tassianna then returned to the first page and read the marginal comments. She then completed her review process by rereading all of the comments in the context of her essay.

L2 self-reported essay review process. Ida was the only participant whose sequential order changed between semi-structured interviews. As illustrated in Table 3 the difference in her two reports was the order of when she looked at the grade. The grade was the last thing Ida reported looking at in the initial interview, but in her second semi-structured interview, she reported looking at the grade while counting her grammatical mistakes at the same time. Ida's explanation for counting the comments reflected her experience in China with receiving comments in her writing classes. Whether she looked at the grade first and then counted the corrections or counted the corrections and then looked at the grade, to her the result was the same: the number of grammatical corrections determined the grade.

Paul's experiences with receiving comments were limited because he did not recall regularly receiving comments from his instructors. He reported in the semi-

structured interviews that on the occasions he did remember receiving comments, his process began with looking at the grade. He explained that if he did take the time to read the comments, he would read the marginal comments until he reached the end comment on the last page.

L1 and L2 Observed Essay Review Process

L1 observed essay review process. When Tatiana received her essay back from Ms. Terry, she read each intralinear comment until she reached the end of the essay. She then returned to the first page and read each marginal comment in context until she reached the end comment on the last page. She finished her review by reading the end comment and looking at the grade. Tassianna started her actual review process by scanning through the essay looking at the intralinear comments. She then read the end comment and the grade. Her final step was a very slow detailed review of each comment in the context of the essay.

L2 observed essay review process. Ida turned to the last page and looked at the grade first, she then returned to the first page and counted the intralinear comments. She finished her review by reading the marginal comments until she reached the end comment on the last page. When Paul received his essay back from Ms. Terry, he started his process by reading each comment sequentially, beginning with the marginal comments, then moving on to the intralinear corrections, and ending with reading the end comment and looking at the grade.

L1 and L2 Students' Explanations for the Changed Essay Review Process

L1 students' explanation of their essay review process. Tatiana suggested that she might have changed her review process for this assignment because of the conversations

she had with Ms. Terry in the one-on-one in-class conference. Tatiana said that she did not look at the grade first because Ms. Terry read and corrected all of the grammar errors in her essay while they were in the conference together. She was not concerned about her grade on this essay, but she was curious about what Ms. Terry wrote about the changes she made since her conference draft of her essay.

Tassianna stated that instead of immediately turning to the end comment, she paused to see if she had improved on the grammar topics that Ms. Terry had discussed with her in the one-on-one in-class conference. In addition, she also commented that she was looking to see if her grammar had improved overall since she started at Fahey College. To check her performance, she suggested if she counted fewer grammatical corrections than she had on prior essays, she felt that her grammar was improving. Since she now only saw one error where there had been six on the prior draft, she concluded that her grammar was improving. She then continued with her normal review process as stated in the semi-structured interviews.

L2 students' explanation for their essay review process. Ida explained that when she turned to the final page of her essay, she was surprised by her high score because in the process of turning to the grade page, she had counted multiple grammatical errors. She was unsure why with all the grammatical mistakes only a few points had been deducted from her score. She felt that Ms. Terry was lenient with her grade because Ms. Terry wanted to encourage her. She was happy with the grade, but she was not sure how Ms. Terry came up with it. She commented that she was sure that her paper had the most grammatical problems in the class, which she attributed to her "low language ability."

When Paul got the essay back from Ms. Terry he explained that, "[he] saw the first page, [and he] saw all […] this feedback on it so [he] kinda wanted to read that first." He elaborated, saying that he had never received so much feedback before, which distracted him from thinking about the grade. Paul appreciated Ms. Terry's feedback on his essay, and he wanted to make sure he read and understood what she had written. He was especially appreciative for the comments that directly referenced how he had corrected a comment she wrote during the conference. The amount of comments made him feel as though Ms. Terry had really taken a lot of time to go through his essay "with a fine toothed comb."

Summary of the Essay Review Process

All of the students agreed that grammar would be the focus of the comments and the most heavily weighted component in determining the grade. All discussed receiving intralinear comments, end comments, and a grade. Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul identified marginal comments as an additional factor while Ida reported having never received marginal comments prior to Ms. Terry's course. While the order in which they chose to review these elements had slight variations, the fact that they all referenced the same types of comments demonstrates a certain consistency in the commenting genre. Ida was the only student who varied her self-reported review process in the two interviews, reversing her counting of comments and looking at the grade. Despite Ida's slight deviation, all of the participants self reported review processes were similar to one another.

When the process was observed, however, there was a substantial difference between students and processes. Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul demonstrated a different

review process than they reported in the semi-structured interviews, while Ida's observed essay review process was identical to what she had stated in the semi-structured interviews.

When the students discussed this changed behavior, one unifying factor appeared: the students that demonstrated a change in review process were the ones who had met with Ms. Terry for a conference. Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul had altered some aspect of the essay review process, citing examples from their interaction with Ms. Terry in the conference as the reason why they approached the essay in a different manner than they had in the past. Ida, who did not conference with Ms. Terry, did not change her process and did not understand how she got a good grade on the essay when she had made so many grammatical errors. The method she used in China of counting the comments to predict the grade did not work with Ms. Terry's written responses, and she did not understand why.

Table 3: Student's Self-Reported Essay Review Process Compared to the Observed Essay Review Process

	Student		1st Step	2nd Step	3rd Step	4th Step
L1	Tatiana	Process Stated in 1st /2nd Interviews	Look at grade	Read end comment	Read marginal comments	
		Observed Process in Stimulated Elicitation	Read intralinear first; Paragraph by paragraph to the end	Read marginal comments in context	Read end comment	Looked at grade
	Tassianna	Process Stated in 1st /2nd Interviews	Read end comment	Looked at Grade	Detailed reading of marginal comments	Re-read all comments
		Observed Process in Stimulated Elicitation	Skimmed intralinear grammar comments	Read end comment	Looked at Grade	Detailed slow reading of marginal comments
L2	Ida	Process Stated in 1st Interview	Counted mistakes	Read intralinear comments	Read end comment	Looked at Grade
		Process Stated in 2nd Interview	Looked at Grade	Read and counted intralinear comments about grammar	Read marginal comments carefully	Read end comment
		Observed Process in Stimulated Elicitation	Looked at Grade	Counted intralinear comments	Carefully read marginal comments	Read end comment
	Paul	Process Stated in 1st /2nd Interviews	Looked at Grade	Read marginal comments	Read end comment	
		Observed Process in Stimulated Elicitation	Read all comments sequentially	Read marginal comments	Looked at intralinear comments	End comment and grade

First Comment: What Students Saw First

After the students had reviewed his or her essay during the stimulated elicitation interviews, I asked each participant to recall the first thing on the essay that they saw or reacted to. The L1 and L2 students all identified a grammatical comment, either marginal or intralinear. The L1 and L2 students' explanations for why that was the first comment they saw were different from one another.

L1 students' first comment. Tatiana stated that the first thing she saw on the essay was where Ms. Terry had inserted a comma. Her only response was to say that "one was better than the six or seven comma corrections Ms. Terry had made," on her first draft. She explained that she probably saw that comma correction first because she and Ms. Terry had spent some time working on commas in the conference and she wanted to see which of Ms. Terry's corrections she missed when she revised her essay.

Tassianna also identified a correction to a grammatical error as the first thing that she saw on the essay. She said that she always looked over the grammar corrections first because grammar was the most important aspect about becoming a good writer. Tassianna viewed the intralinear marks as corrections and not comments. For Tassianna, intralinear marks identified errors, but she was curious about the corrections in this instance because she thought that she and Ms. Terry found all of the grammatical issues with her paper during their conference together.

L2 students' first comment. To Ida, the intralinear marks were like the corrections she had experienced as a student in China. These marks were exactly what she was expecting, however, she was not expecting the marginal comments. Ida thought the marginal comments contained explanations for a grammatical error identified by the

intralinear comment. So she tried to connect each intralinear comment to a marginal one. Ida's first utterance was the interjection, "Wow, a lot of comments," pointing to one of the intralinear comments in her essay's title. The correction was a capitalization correction editorial mark instructing Ida to capitalize "my" in her title "Self worthiness — my impression on a trip in China." Ida did not understand the correction, and she later said that she wished she knew why it needed to be capitalized. Ida did not understand why Ms. Terry did not explain the correction.

The first thing Paul reported seeing when he reviewed his essay was a comma inserted in his first paragraph. He recalled that he noticed that comma first because he knew it meant he had done something wrong. Paul explained that those types of comments are, "just pointing out better grammar, showing the rules of English." Paul expressed some concern about the comma correction because he thought that he had made all of the suggested changes that Ms. Terry requested in the conference.

Summary of L1 and L2 First Comment

Regardless of the review process each followed, all of the students reported that the first thing they saw on the essay was an intralinear grammatical correction on the first page. Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul all mentioned that they believed that they saw those comments first because of some conversation that each of them had had in the conference with Ms. Terry. In fact, they went as far as to say that they could hear Ms. Terry's voice as they read Ms. Terry's comments. Tassianna stated, "And going through it now, I can hear her, and I can almost see her reading this and hear her writing this on my paper." The experience was different for Ida. Ida never had a conference with Ms. Terry because she never asked Ms. Terry for a conference. Ida stated, "Ms. Terry has a big class, many

students essays, she is very busy, and I don't want to bother her." Every time Ms. Terry came by Ida's desk, Ida was so busy working on the assignment that Ms. Terry did not want to interrupt Ida's process or more directly, Ms. Terry stated, "Ida had so many things that she was working on, and I did want her to disrupt her." As a result of this, Ida and Ms. Terry never had a chance to interact one-on-one in a conference.

Summary of Research Question #3

The findings for the third research question focused on several aspects of the students' essay review process. Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul reported that they altered their typical review process as a result of the relationship they had established with Ms. Terry in the conference. Ida, who did not conference with Ms. Terry, did not change her essay review process from what she had previously used with her instructors in China. When the students were asked to identify and discuss the first written response they saw on the essay, they each identified an intralinear grammatical correction. However, when they reported why they felt that was the first item they saw, Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul referenced some aspect of the conversation in the conference with Ms. Terry while Ida referenced a connection to her experiences with written response in China.

> Thus, the expressiveness of individual words is not inherent in the words themselves as units of language, nor does it issue directly from the meaning of these words: it is either typical generic expression or it is an echo of another's individual expression, which makes the word, as it were, representative of another's whole utterance from a particular evaluative position (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 89).

Summary of Findings

In this study's investigation of the written response process used by Ms. Terry for her College Composition and Research class at Fahey College, the findings revealed the attitudes and expectations of Ms. Terry and four of her students, and analyzed how these

expectations evolved through the written response process. Using the theoretical framework of Bakhtin's speech genre, the findings from the first two research questions, exploring the respective attitudes and expectations of the instructor and her students, defined the parameters of the written response speech genres present in the course. The third research question, exploring the student's review process of the graded papers, sought to determine the factors that affected their review process.

There was little variation between the attitudes and expectations of all the participants. Ms. Terry and the participants all believed that correcting grammar was the primary focus of the comments, and all confirmed that comments on content were considerably less common and less important. A second common feature about the commenting process involved the actual structure of the assignment process. All of the participants believed that assignments began with the distribution of an assignment prompt, which would instruct the student as to the topic, length, style, due date, and included some discussion of how the essay would be graded.

Following the assignment distribution, the participants recalled completing the assignment outside of class and submitting it to the instructor on the due date. Ms. Terry and the students' attitudes about the actual commenting process had slight variations, but the general concepts were the same. The essays would be read by the instructor and would be returned in approximately one week. The comments were hand-written by the instructor and were written at the point of the error on the page—intralinear comments. If additional comments were required, a brief statement would be written in the margin. The final page would contain an end comment and a grade. All of the participants expected

the end comment to include holistic statements about the grammatical correctness of the essay.

Ms. Terry expected that L1 and L2 students were sensitive about content comments, so she limited her comments to brief sentences. Ms. Terry believed that the students were easily discouraged in English classes, and she felt that one of the main contributors to this feeling was that the students did not really understand the commenting process used by their instructors. Ms. Terry believed that the creation of comments was vital for students to improve as writers. She had also expressed significant concern that comments often went unused and/or misunderstood because the instructor and the student did not know enough about one another to communicate effectively in the written response medium. As a result, she focused her commenting efforts on improving the relationship between her and the students prior to the student receiving any written comments from her.

The primary technique Ms. Terry felt improved this relationship was the instructor-student conference. In particular, she believed that the L2 students would most benefit from these conferences because in the conference she could use her experience as an ESL instructor to determine the student's language ability and cater her comments to the student's specific language needs. While the conferences provided the venue for Ms. Terry to obtain this information, the relationship building benefit of the conferences had a greater impact.

In observing the students' review process for their graded essays, the conferences emerged as the defining factor affecting their review process. The only student who did not conference with Ms. Terry, Ida, was also the only student who did not modify her

review process. The other three students, who did conference with Ms. Terry, all changed their review process and their understanding of her written response comments. In the students' explanation of these changes, they all referenced their one-on-one conference. Parallel to the change in their review process, the students' interpretations of Ms. Terry's comments, Bakhtin's (1986) expressive intonation (p. 89), was also dependent on the one-on-one conference.

With the foundation of the past research, this study initially posited that a student's understanding of the written response genre would be highly dependent on their language level. However, the findings demonstrated that the malleability of the students' review process was less dependent on their language level, and more impacted by whether or not they had developed a relationship with Ms. Terry through the one-on-one conferences.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Findings

The findings explored Ms. Terry's attitudes and expectations about written response as well as the students' attitudes and expectations about the written response processes and methods of both past instructors and Ms. Terry respectively. The information collected from the participants' attitudes and expectations suggested that there were common written response features shared by both Ms. Terry and the students. In order to investigate how students interpreted Bakhtin's (1986) concept of expressive intonation in Ms. Terry's written response, the findings analyzed data collected from the moment when the students' essays were returned. The findings detailed the students' essay review process, including what was the first thing on the essay they saw and why they looked at it, and whether or not they changed their review process.

Ms. Terry's approach to written instruction included aspects from both product and process written instruction paradigms. Ms. Terry hybridized these practices in an attempt to improve the instructor/student relationship and create a better learning environment for the students. She used a detailed assignment prompt, a scaffolded assignment process including one-on-one conferencing, and a consistent format of corrections to improve her students' composition skills and better their understanding of the written review process. While Ms. Terry tried to use more direct language in her comments for L2 students, she stressed that the focus of her comments would be on grammar for both L1 and L2 students.

The findings discussed the students' general attitudes about written response from their previous instructors and their specific expectations for Ms. Terry's written response to their essays. Prior to the start of the study, each student already had experienced written response. Those experiences had certain common features to Ms. Terry's process, allowing the students to relate to the situation in the study. While the students all carried with them the genre created in past courses, their attitude and expectations varied depending on the depth of the relationship they developed with Ms. Terry.

The teacher/student relationship also became a key factor in the students' interpretation of Ms. Terry's expressive intonation. As explored in Research Question Three, the one-on-one conference was the greatest factor in the students' interpretation of her expressive intonation, and this paved the way for a new speech genre.

Discussion

> Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances. These we may call speech genres. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 60)

As examined through the lens of Bakhtinian theory, the students and Ms. Terry were communicating in a speech genre. The similarities in the students' past experiences with written response reinforced Bakhtin's assertion that speech genres are evident in all realms of daily life and that in most cases the individuals using these genres are unaware that they are participating in a speech genre. Bakhtin (1986) explained that individuals are as oblivious to these genres as when learning a native language.

> We are given these speech genres in almost the same way that we are given our native language, which we master fluently long before we begin to study grammar. We assimilate forms of language only in forms of utterances and in conjunction with these forms. The forms of utterances and the typical forms of utterance, that it, speech genres, enter our experience and our consciousness together, and in close connection with one another. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 78)

Through their individual experiences with the genre, whether acting as speaker/writer or listener/reader, Ms. Terry, Tatiana, Tassianna, Ida, and Paul, "learn[ed] to construct utterances" in the same manner that they learned to speak (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 86). Just like a child who notices the unique speech patterns and euphemisms of his/her parents, so do students learn different speech genres formed by their past experience. Ms. Terry, Tatiana, Tassianna, Ida, and Paul began the College Composition and Research course at Fahey College with preconceived attitudes about written response, writing, English classes, and English teachers. These attitudes reflected the students' experiences with the written response genre. To define the written response speech genre in the study, the key elements of Bakhtin's (1986) speech genre must be identified in the findings.

Overview of Bakhtin's Four Constitutive Elements of a Speech Genre

In order to understand the written response speech genre, the four key Bakhtinian components of the utterance must be discussed as they related to Ms. Terry and the students. Bakhtin asserted that four constitutive elements comprise a speech genre: (a) a change of speakers, (b) finalizability, (c) expressive intonation, and (d) addressivity. The change of speakers occurred in the study when the essay was exchanged between the speaker/writer (Ms. Terry) and the listener/reader (student). Finalization occurred when the listener/reader (the student) determined that a response was expected and, as s/he identified his/her role in this responsive position, s/he becomes the speaker/writer. The speaker/writer's (the student's) interpretation of Ms. Terry's expressive intonation was demonstrated in his/her response to Ms. Terry's written comments. Addressivity appeared as Ms. Terry's distinct consideration for the differing language levels of each student.

An important aspect to consider in discussing speech genres is that the four constitutive elements and their components do not occur in any particular standardized or sequential order. Bakhtin's only definitive statement about the order of the components is that each utterance begins and ends with a change of speakers. The signals of finalizability, the expressive intonation, and the addressivity of an utterance are interwoven and co-dependent upon one another. The complexity of addressing how the findings fit into this model demands a structure that may initially appear to be linear; however, the relationship between the components is more fluid than a linear organizational structure. Where appropriate this organizational limitation was addressed, showing the codependence of the key elements of the utterance in the written response speech genre.

Change of Speakers: Instructor (Speaker/Writer) Returning Essay to Student (Listener/Reader)

> The boundaries of each concrete utterance as a unit of speech communion are determined by a *change of speaking subjects,* that is, a change of speakers. Any utterance [...] is preceded by the utterances of others, and its end is followed by the responsive utterances of others (or, although it may be silent, others' active responsive understanding, or, finally, a responsive action based on this understanding). (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 71)

In the current study, these boundaries played a critical role in the determination of the written response speech genre. The boundaries of the utterance are identified by the speaker/writer (Ms. Terry) through the thematic content, linguistic style, and/or compositional structure. Yet to be successful, the theme, style, and structure common in that genre must be recognized by the listener/reader (the student), cueing him or her of the end of the speaker/writer's (Ms. Terry's) utterance. The recognized end of the

utterance provided the opportunity for the student to respond or to assume what Bakhtin (1986) called an "actively responsive understanding" as the speaker/writer (p. 68).

As Bakhtin (1986) acknowledged, the boundary marking the change of speakers can be identified much in the same way that it would be by individuals who are exchanging letters with one another. The role of speaker/writer and listener/reader alternated as the letter is literally exchanged between them. In the genre of written response, the exchange of the essay between the speaker/writer (Ms. Terry) and the listener/reader (the student) was similar to the relationship between individuals exchanging letters. As discussed in the findings, all of the students expected to receive an essay back from the Ms. Terry, and Ms. Terry expected to return the essays to the students; thus both Ms. Terry and the students recognized the essay's return as signifying the change of speakers.

Finalization: Listener/Reader (Student) Identifies Exhausted Theme, Speech Plan/Speech Will, and Speech Genre of the Speaker/Writer (Instructor)

While the change of speakers is indicated by the speaker/writer, finalization is the process the listener/reader goes through to identify that the speaker/writer has finished, so s/he can assume a responsive position and transition to the speaker/writer. Three integral components mark the completion of finalization for the listener/reader (the student): (a) the semantic exhaustiveness of the theme, (b) identification of the speaker's speech will, and (c) the listener/reader's classification of (a) and (b) inside of a particular speech genre

These three markers do not necessarily occur in the sequential order that they are discussed, but all three must be present in order for finalization to be recognized and for the listener/reader to assume a responsive position by becoming the speaker/writer. The

semantic exhaustive state of the theme occurred when the listener/reader recognizes that the speaker/writer, Ms. Terry, has nothing left to communicate. The identification of the speech plan or speech occurred when the student uses any preexisting knowledge of the speaker/writer and the topic to identify the instructor's intentions and methods for writing comments. The final element of finalization occurred when the listener/reader (the student) recognizes the exhaustive state of the theme and the speech will as representative of a particular genre. These three elements of finalization are established through the student's relationship with the instructor and his/her experience with written response.

How they identified the semantic exhaustiveness of the theme.

> This exhaustiveness can be almost complete in certain spheres of everyday life (questions that are purely factual and similarly factual responses to them, requests, orders, and so forth), in certain business circles, in the sphere of military and industrial commands and orders, that is, in those spheres where speech genres are maximally standard by nature and where the creative aspect is almost completely lacking. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 77)

Identifying the semantic exhaustiveness of the theme was a twofold process for the students, starting with the simple physical receipt of the graded essay, and confirmed by their reading of Ms. Terry's written response. The students all recognized the receipt of the essay from the instructor as a signal that the instructor had completed commenting on the essay. Each student had experienced a similar transfer in prior classes and all indicated that when the essay was returned, they knew that they were expected to respond or at least to "assume a responsive attitude toward it (for example, executing an order)" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 76).

Recognizing the exhausted state of the theme was not just signaled by the return of the essay. At the moment when it was returned, the receipt of the essay alluded to the theme's exhausted state, but in order to assume a responsive position, there must be

something written on the essay to which to respond. The student must see and recognize the markings made by the instructor, assuring the student that the instructor did in fact read and respond to the essay. In addition, the comment must be one that the student identifies as requiring a response, whether an active response or through active responsive understanding.

In the findings, the students' explanation of intralinear corrections on essays demonstrated how they assumed a responsive attitude in the study. When the students in the study saw the intralinear marks, each one stated that they knew what the comments' content was: grammar. In addition, these comments also had an expected response from their experience. When they read the comments aloud in the stimulated elicitation interview, Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul all stated that the intralinear grammatical corrections made by Ms. Terry were not comments. To the students, comments suggested an opportunity for discussion, but intralinear corrections were a command that only had one response: compliance to grammatical rules. Because the students saw these types of comments on their essays, they knew that Ms. Terry had corrected their grammar and that their responsive role, acknowledging that a grammatical error needed correction, was expected.

While previous studies stated that this type of imperative command in written response was not received well by students (Prior, 1997; Straub, 2003), and viewed as appropriating a student's text and devaluing the student's voice (Brannan & Knoblauch, 1982; Sommers, 1982), there was no indication that the students in the current study felt at all devalued. In fact, they all stated that those types of grammatical corrections were both expected and welcomed. As the grammatical correction were expected, present, and

understood by the students, they helped to establish the semantic exhaustiveness of the theme.

How they identified Ms. Terry's speech plan or speech will. Although the participants experienced different styles of written response in the past, core components of written response were critical to the genre's correct identification: the distribution of a writing prompt, a heavy focus on grammar, and a consistent format of corrections and comments. These familiar elements allowed the students to recognize Ms. Terry's speech will as similar to the speech wills of their past instructors.

All of the students remembered receiving formal writing prompts from past instructors, which White (1999) argued as being critical to the students' success. They recalled that these prompts always contained the same categories: length and style requirements, a topic or list of topics, and a due date. Ms. Terry's use of a writing prompt met the students' expectations based on their experiences with the written response genre in other classes.

Consistent with the students' past experiences, the goal of the essays was to improve the students' grammar. They expected grammar comments to be the main focus of the comments and the primary criteria for determining the grade on the assignment. The placement of comments and corrections also demonstrated a certain consistent pattern with all of the participants. Students expected comments about grammar to be written between the lines, in the margin, and/or summarized in the end comment on the final page. Moreover, all of the students anticipated that the final page was the location for the final grade, written as either a numeric value or a letter grade.

The common features found between Ms. Terry's speech will and that of the students' previous instructors suggested that these were stable features of the written response speech genre. However, Ms. Terry introduced an unfamiliar element that the students had not experienced with previous instructors: Ms. Terry used an instructor-student one-on-one conference. As Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul had individual conferences with Ms. Terry, they developed a deeper understanding of Ms. Terry's written response process, recognizing her distinct intentions, process and style of commentary. Ida, who did not participate in the conferencing, did not gain this additional insight.

How listener/reader classified exhaustive theme and speech will inside the written response speech genre. In regards to Bakhtin's theory, as the listener/reader identifies the exhausted state of the theme and determines the elements composing the speaker/writer's speech will, s/he is simultaneously using that information to determine the overall speech genre. There was enough similarity between all of the students' identification of common components of Ms. Terry's speech will and identifying the exhausted state of the speaker/writer's theme, that a very general and broad written response speech genre was created. However, because Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul had a conference with Ms. Terry and Ida did not, they had a different relationship with Ms. Terry than did Ida. The ability of the students to identify the components of finalization was enhanced by the relationship established in the conference. The students who conferenced with Ms. Terry had a better understanding of her speech plan in regards to the commenting process she used because they had seen it during the conference. In addition, they also had a better understanding of the types of responses that Ms. Terry used. That relationship had a

significant effect on how the students interpreted Bakhtin's third component of the speech genre: expressive intonation.

Expressive Intonation

> We usually take [words] from *other utterances*, and mainly from utterances that are kindred to ours in genre, that is, in theme, composition, or style. [...] But words can enter out speech from others' individual utterances, thereby retaining to a greater or lesser degree the tones and echoes of individual utterances. (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 87-88)

The third element of Bakhtin's (1986) speech genre is that the words used in any form of communication have a dictionary meaning that, "ensures […] all speakers of a given language will understand one another" (p. 88). When a word is spoken or written in a particular context, it carries a specific expressive aspect for that genre. The expressive intonation is not created by the instructor when they are the speaker/writer of an utterance, nor is it created by the student when they have become the speaker/writer after identifying the finalization of the instructor. The expressive intonation is adapted from the other utterances in the same or similar genre that the speaker/writer whether the instructor or the student has experienced.

As with their past instructors, all of the students expected Ms. Terry's comments to focus on grammar. While Ida's expectations about grammar comments from Ms. Terry did not change from the attitude that she had at the beginning of the study, Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul's expectation of Ms. Terry's comments had changed from their attitudes at the beginning of the study. In the findings, Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul all stated that in the conference Ms. Terry discussed grammar with them, but that she talked about the students' content as well. While Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul derived the expressive intonation of Ms. Terry's comments from the experience each had with Ms.

Terry in the conference, Ida, who had not had a conference, was still deriving her expressive intonation from her experience in China.

The expressive intonation in the conference with Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul was not established at the change of speakers or moment of finalization. As Bakhtin (1986) suggested, the expressive intonation, "originates at the point of contact between the word and the actual reality" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 88). As noted in the findings, Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul explained that their essay review process and their identification of the first comment was directly influenced by the interaction they had with Ms. Terry in the conference. In this study, this data was collected at the change of speakers and finalization; however, the expressive intonation that was described by Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul was established during the conference. When Ida received her essay back, as she did not have any prior experience with Ms. Terry in regards to receiving written response, the expressive intonation was drawn from her other experiences with written response in China. Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul received written and verbal response from Ms. Terry in the conference, so the expressive intonation they established when they received their essays back reflected their experience with Ms. Terry in the conference.

What is central to this study from Bakhtin's (1986) theory was his assertion that the initial expressive intonation would likely determine the expressive intonation for the entire duration of the utterance (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 91). The three other elements of the genre, (a) the fact that there must be a change of speakers, (b) finalization or the opportunity to respond, and (c) addressivity or that the speaker/writer uses genre specific language for a particular recipient of the utterance, are directly tied to the expressive intonation that is established during the conference. The expressive intonation, as a

constitutive marker of the speech genre, signals the change of subject, ensuring that "what is heard and actively understood will find its response in the subsequent speech or behavior of the listener" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 91).

Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul all communicated that prior to their class with Ms. Terry, they had never had the chance to sit down with an instructor and witness the process that an instructor goes through as s/he read an essay. When Ms. Terry wrote on their essay during the conference, they all stated that they had a better understanding of the Ms. Terry's written response process. Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul also noted that they learned more from this because Ms. Terry was able to explain grammatical issues in more detail in the conference. Although Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul all stated that the conference was initially a little uncomfortable, supporting Ferris' (2003) same conclusions about students' apprehensions in a one-on-one conference, the overall reaction and the benefit of establishing the expressive intonation for reading the instructor's written responses outweighed the discomfort discussed in the literature.

In fact, this type of conference has been lauded by the academic community as an excellent method for improving instructor/student communication. Previous studies found that L1 students appreciated the time with the instructor, and results show that they benefited more from this activity than from peer review or traditional written response (Coffin et al., 2003; Elbow, 1989; Evans, 1997; Ferris, 2003; Freedman, 1987; Freedman & Katz, 1987; Freedman & Sperling, 1985; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Hacker, 1996; Prior, 1998). In the interviews, this positive reaction to conferencing was supported by both Tatiana and Tassianna who explained that they appreciated the conferences with Ms. Terry because they were able to ask questions and get immediate feedback. For that

reason, they both believed that conferencing was a better method of delivering feedback than written comments. In addition, they also believed that the time spent with Ms. Terry in the conference improved their understanding of how Ms. Terry provides comments.

In contrast to the positive results of conferencing in L1 research, there was less than optimistic results from L2 research. Numerous studies have suggested that L2 students were not comfortable having a one-on-one conversation with his or her instructor and on occasion did not show up for the conference (Ferris, 2003; Rose, 1982; Tsui & Ng, 2000). As the literature supported, Ida did not take the opportunity to have a conference with Ms. Terry, however Paul, who was also an L2 student, was enthusiastic about the conference with Ms. Terry. While Ida's avoidance of the conference supported Ferris' (2003) conclusion that L2 students were not comfortable with conferencing directly with an instructor, Paul reported that conferencing allowed him to understand how much Ms. Terry really cared about his writing and about him. He said that because he had the benefit of conferencing with Ms. Terry, he felt like he knew exactly how to read her comments, he could hear her voice as he read the comments, making her comments seem more like the conversation from their conference than like the critiques he remembered from his past instructors. Paul unconsciously carried with him the expressive intonation that Ms. Terry established in the conference.

This response to an unfamiliar situation was discussed by Bakhtin (1986) when he explained the difficulty "a person who has an excellent command of speech in some areas of cultural communication […] is silent or very awkward" when they encounter an speech genre with which they are not familiar. Ida did not understand the conferences and

she did not feel that she had the right to request a conference from her instructor, stating that this type of forward behavior would never be allowed in China.

As a result of the conference, Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul had all experienced a more robust speech genre than Ida had experienced. As this connected back to the Bakhtinian argument, the behavior change of the different essay review process demonstrated by Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul was a response to what had unknowingly become the initial utterance in this speech genre. The conversation between Ms. Terry and the students in the conference established the initial expressive intonation. This became the initiating mark of the genre, and the expressive intonation of that first utterance set the parameters for the speech genre.

Addressivity

> When speaking I always take into account the apperceptive background of the addressee's perception of my speech: the extent to which he is familiar with the situation, whether he has special knowledge of the given cultural area of communication, his views and convictions, his prejudices (from my viewpoint), his sympathies and antipathies--because all this will determine his active responsive understanding of my utterance. These considerations also determine my choice of a genre for my utterance, my choice of compositional devices, and, finally, my choice of language vehicles, that is, the style of my utterance." (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 96)

The final element of the speech genre is that in any situation words are used in utterances that are particularly chosen for the specific addressee of the speaker. The addressivity of the genre suggests that the while the speaker/writer is communicating, s/he uses his or her knowledge of the addressee but also his or her knowledge of what they think the addressee knows about the genre. Ms. Terry catered her review process and her commenting language to be appropriate for the students' knowledge of the written response speech genre. Ms. Terry approached the entire written response process trying to perceive how her responses would be interpreted by the students. She felt that the

students had not had positive experiences with writing in general, so everything from the manner in which she delivered the assignment to when and in what style she wrote comments was designed to improve the students' attitudes about writing.

As Bakhtin noted, the speaker/writer will make decisions regarding the style of the utterance based on what s/he knows about the addressee, which is exactly what Ms. Terry attempted to do. Her attempts to understand the experiences of her students followed the same trial and error path that she had established over her entire teaching career. She adopted practices that would help her to get to know her students, and used that information to improve her ability to provide helpful instruction.

Ms. Terry knew that most students expected to receive an assignment, write the assignment at home, and submit the assignment on the due date. These characteristics are representative of what Hairston (1982) and Faigley (1986/1990) termed the product-based paradigm of writing. Ms. Terry veered from this paradigm by allowing the students to work on the assignment in class, and to submit the assignment in a scaffolded manner. Her goal was to give herself time to get to know the students in the class while they wrote, so she could try to figure out the best way for her to communicate with each student. The primary method for obtaining this knowledge was to engage the students in an instructor/student conference so she could provide one-on-one instruction while teaching the students the writing process and explaining correct grammar. Just as the one-on-one conference gave the participating students a greater insight into Ms. Terry's speech will, the conference setting allowed Ms. Terry to more accurately address her students. Unfortunately, Ida did not have a conference, and as such Ms. Terry was unable to effectively establish the same relationship that she had with the participating students.

Without that experience, Ms. Terry did not have the tools needed to address Ida's needs. She had no frame of reference for addressivity with Ida.

Recommendations

This section details the recommendations for both researchers and practitioners. The importance of this study has different implications based on the needs of the individuals using the information. As such, a separate section for both researchers and for practioners organizes this section.

Recommendations for Researchers

In the current study, the importance of the conference to Tatiana. Tassianna, and Paul's experience in the class was substantial. One of the major limitations to the current study was that there was not a mechanism to collect data from the conferences. On the second day of my observations, Ms. Terry introduced the conference to the class when she handed out the written assignment prompt. As she began conducting the conferences, I was able to listen in from a distance, but I could not capture the discussion verbatim, so I had to rely on the testimonials of Ms. Terry, Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul as to the structure of the conference and more importantly in the current study the reactions that each had to the conferencing process as it related to written response. Considering the importance of these conferences to the current study, a study focused on collecting data from the conference would better investigate the impact of conferencing students' interpretation of written response. Since there has not been any study conducted on how the conference related to the written comments later provided by the instructor, the field of written response theory would benefit from such an investigation.

As noted in the review of the literature, one of the limitations to the field of research in written response is the lack of research that accounts for the context surrounding the writing class (Bazerman, 2004; Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Brice, 1995; Cavalcanti, 1990; Connors & Lunsford, 1993; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 2003; Paulus, 1999; Straub 1999). As was discovered in this study, an instructor's and the students' own personal backgrounds with written response had a significant impact on how they approached teaching and learning, and consequently, how to write and to understand written response. There are a number of contextual elements, which should be considered for future investigations.

The method of instruction used by the instructor in the classroom needs to be included in determining how comments are written and how they are interpreted. With the transition from the product-based paradigm of writing instruction to the process-based paradigm, many of the same assumptions about the efficacy of written response are being used in studies without considering how the classroom instruction may be impacting their use. For example, the use of the imperatives as comments is discouraged in written response theory because it was thought that imperatives "appropriated the text" (Sommers, 1982, p. 149). In the current study, imperatives were used by the instructor, but the students did not see them as taking away from their voice in the text. The imperatives were connected to a particular aspect of the relationship between the instructor and the student from the conference. If some of the practices currently supported or repudiated did not consider the significant importance of the student-instructor relationship into the methodology, then techniques that could be beneficial to

students might not be further investigated to see the efficacy of the practice when the context of the student-instructor relationship is considered.

Another contextual element that has been neglected is rhetorical style of the writing assignment. The students in this study had different reactions to writing a narrative assignment than they had to writing a research essay. In the current study, Ida was very frustrated about the narrative assignment because narratives were the only type of writing assignment that she really remembered doing in China and she did not like writing about her own life. In addition, if the instructor were to ask the students to participate in peer review sessions, the students may be reluctant to comment on content issues with another student because the information is so personal.

Another recommendation drawn from the results in the current study would be to broaden the focus of the study to include more participants. The number of participants in the current study eliminates the generalizability of this study to a larger population. Because so much of the data collection for the study involved trying to contextualize the comments to the individual historical background of the students' experience with written response, this study is not generalizable. However, as the conclusion discusses, the instructor-student relationship is paramount to the effectiveness of these comments on these students, so a larger study needs to be conducted to find out if that relationship is as important to other students as it was for the students in the current study.

Recommendations for Practitioners

There are a number of recommendations for practitioners of written response that the current study introduced. The most substantial finding from this study was just how important the instructor-student relationship was to the efficacy of the written response.

The main instrument from this study that improved that relationship was the student-instructor conference.

As Ms. Terry demonstrated through her approach to the writing assignment, the contextual factors from the classroom that contributed to each students' ability to understand and benefit from the instructor's written responses were not limited to the assignment. From the moment Ms. Terry introduced the assignment to the students, they each began to formulate an idea about the type of instructor that Ms. Terry was. As discussed in the findings, the students' interpretation of Ms. Terry's speech plan began before the assignment was submitted by the students. Students brought the voices of their past experience with instructors and written response into their current situation. In the study, however, Ms. Terry's use of the conference allowed the students to get to know her on a more personal level before the assignment was submitted. Not only did Ms. Terry develop a better understanding of the writing skills of the student, but the students also understood Ms. Terry's process for commenting.

In a conference, practitioners should spend some time questioning students about the type of comments they have received in the past. By asking students about their experiences in the past, the instructor can tailor his or her comments to the students individually. In addition, conducting a conference session with each student at the beginning of the class can improve both the instructor's understanding of the students' experience and attitude about writing and written response. With this information, instructors can prepare class discussions and activities that are catered to the specific needs of the students. This is especially important if the instructor is teaching a class where the students have had difficulty with writing classes in the past. In the present

study, the students all had some negative experiences with writing instructors. Ms. Terry attempted to understand the students' attitudes through her attention to addressivity. She used the conference as an opportunity to cater her teaching and response style to the experiences of the students. Ms. Terry used the information to try to understand the students' L1 or L2 status, and she altered her approach based on what she learned. However, her adaptations to the language style in her comments did not prove to be as beneficial as the relationship she established with the three students in the conference. Since the voices of past instructors will be part of the way they interpret any new instructors' comments, it is in the instructor's best interest to make sure that the student understands the comment's intended meaning.

Conclusion

> [Expressive Intonation] originates at the point of contact between the word and actual reality, under the conditions of that real situation articulated by the individual utterance. In this case the word appears as an expression of some evaluative position of an individual person (authority, writer, scientist, father, mother, friend, teacher, and so forth), as an abbreviation of the utterance. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 88)

> Any utterance, in addition to its own theme, always responds (in the broad sense of the word) in one form or another to others' utterances that precede it. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 94)

While the findings of this study did not reflect a difference in the interpretation of expressive intonation between the L1 and L2 students, there was a specific expressive intonation interpreted by each of the students. That expressive intonation was located inside of the written response speech genre. Since Bakhtin (1986) viewed the constitutive elements of the speech genre as inseparable from one another, expressive intonation can only be discussed as it pertains to the other elements comprising the speech genre.

As discussed in the findings, each student brought with him or her a mental understanding of written response. His or her attitudes towards written response was comprised of the identification of certain components that were familiar to him or her from his or her past. As each of these was either recognized as familiar from past experiences or as unique to the current environment, the environment became either more or less similar to their his or her experiences or speech genres.

All of the participants were participating in a speech genre; however, as a result of the relationship established in the conference with Ms. Terry, there were two versions of the written response speech genre: Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul in one and Ida in the other. This schism in the genre occurred as a result of how the students' interpretations of expressive intonation were established.

The change of speakers signaled by Ms. Terry's return of the essay to the students occurred at the same time that the students recognized the elements of finalization in Ms. Terry's action, assuming a responsive role in the written response genre. The words chosen by the instructor at the Bakhtinian change of speakers and identified by the student during finalization are devoid of specific expressive intonation until the actual moment when the listener/reader becomes the speaker/writer and responds. It is at that moment that all of the components of the utterance are present and it is that expressive intonation that controls how the genre is defined.

In particular, the students' identification of Ms. Terry's speech will in the finalization of the exchange demonstrated how the instructor-student relationship that Ms. Terry valued so much and demonstrated Bakhtin's addressivity of the genre had an impact on how the written response genre was defined. For Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul

the expectations that they had for Ms. Terry's written response process and practice, Bakhtin's speech plan or will, signaled the finalization of the utterance. As discussed in the findings, the speech plan that signaled that finalization for Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul was based upon the relationship that they established with Ms. Terry in the conference. Since Ida, did not have a conference with Ms. Terry, her ability to identify the parameters of Ms. Terry's speech plan relied solely upon the past utterances that were similar to this genre: her written response experience in China. As noted by Bakhtin (1986) the expressive intonation is "either typical generic expression or it is an echo of another's individual expression" (p. 89). For Ida, the expressive intonation was an echo from her experiences in China whereas Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul's expressive intonation was Ms. Terry's echo from the conference.

The importance of this study to the field of rhetoric and composition is significant because it considered the contextual background of the participants as constitutive elements of written response. The inclusion of the contextual background of the participants demonstrated that the students and the instructor had certain common attitudes and expectations about written response that allowed them to understand one another inside of a speech genre. However, the discovery that the expressive intonation for Tatiana, Tassianna, and Paul was established in the conferences with Ms. Terry and not at the moment when the essay was returned suggests that the manner in which written response is approached both in research and in practice needs to be reconsidered. Moreover, since the expressive intonation established in the conference had such a positive impact on these participants, rhetoric and composition must address the importance of the instructor-student relationship as being the central component to

understanding how students interpret the written response that instructors provide. Any investigation into written response should include some investigation into when written response begins for both students and instructors.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRBPHS Application Approval Notice

From	IRBPHS <irbphs@usfca.edu>
Sent	Tuesday, April 18, 2006 6:23 pm
To	
Cc	
Bcc	
Subject	IRB Application # 06-033 - Application Approved

April 18, 2006

Dear Mr. Erskine:

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study.
Your application has been approved by the committee (IRBPHS #06-033).
Please note the following:

1. Approval expires twelve (12) months from the dated noted above. At that time, if you are still in collecting data from human subjects, you must file a renewal application.
2. Any modifications to the research protocol or changes in instrumentation (including wording of items) must be communicated to the IRBPHS. Re-submission of an application may be required at that time.
3. Any adverse reactions or complications on the part of participants must be reported (in writing) to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRBPHS at (415) 422-6091.
On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
----
IRBPHS University of San Francisco
Counseling Psychology Department
Education Building - 017
2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA 94117-1080

irbphs@usfca.edu
----
http://www.usfca.edu/humansubjects/

Appendix B: Narrative Essay Assignment Prompt

Narrative Essay

Overview:
Students will write a narrative essay. Make the story being told is that it is possible. Use down one descriptors (adjectives, adverbs, and her positional phrases) to bring the story to life.

Written Paper Requirements:
Outline.
The paper must be typed, using 12 -Times Roman font, double-spaced. The required length of this paper is 1000 to 1500 words (approximately 2-3 pages).
Used MLA formatting if there are in-text citations and a works cited page.

Writing Guidelines:
Brainstorm possible topics. Have a picture or an artifact in front of you to help you with recall.
Create an outline of the main ideas.
Support the main ideas with detail.
Write a draft paper.
Have others look at the draft.
Make final revisions.

Assessment: Assessment of the essay will be based on the following:

Content: point of the essay is clear. Details and specifics makes toward a memorable. Content is appropriate for audience. (40 points).

Organization: Introduction Gained Attention and Goodwill, Sets the Tone, Build Credibility. Transitions leave smoothly from one detail and/or paragraph to another. Ending (conclusion) ties the essay together. (30 points).

Grammar and Word Use: Grammar is correct word uses formal and appropriate to the topic. (10 points).

Capitalization and Punctuation: capitalization and punctuation are correctly used. (10 points).

Outline: Outline uncovers the main ideas of the essay. (10 points)

Appendix C: Informal Questionnaire

Informal Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. Your responses to these questions are very important to me and my research. I want to reassure you that your responses are completely confidential. I will be the **only** person who will ever see your responses. Should you have questions or concerns, please ask the researcher now, or feel free to review the information sheet or the informed consent form for further explanation and/or contact information for the researcher and for University of San Francisco's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Instructions: Please read and respond to the questions. The questionnaire should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Part One: Written Feedback

1. What is the purpose, in your opinion, of a teacher writing comments on a student's paper?

2. How much time do you think your English teachers spend commenting on a three to five page essay?

3. If you get a paper back and there are a lot of comments, do you assume that you did well or poorly on the paper?

Part Two: Student Demographics- Circle the response that best represents you.

1. I am female male
2. I am between 18-20 21-24 25-30 31-36 37-45 46+ yrs. old
3. I am studying Net Sec Healthcare Business Fiber optics
4. Is English your native language? yes no
5. Do you speak any other languages other than English yes no
6. List the language(s) in the chart below and answer the following questions about each language.

Language	Number of Years using the language	Where were you born?	How old were you when you began learning the language?	How did you learn the language?	Which language do you speak at home?	Can you write the language?	Can you read the language?	Can you speak the language?