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The Ecology of Peer Response Interactions:
Mapping the Relationship Between Context and Experience in
Multilingual College Composition Environments

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Abstract

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Peer response is a well-established facet of composition pedagogy, and has often been shown to be beneficial for students in linguistically diverse learning environments.

However, levels of investment and engagement vary as do both students' and instructors' confidence in its usefulness as a practice. Instructors understand there are many contextual variables that can impact the success of peer response activities.

Particularly in multilingual composition environments, contextual variables related to linguistic and cultural factors are heightened, and can greatly influence how students interact. For example, different academic experiences and cultural ideologies as well as varying language proficiency might impact students' motivations, attitudes, and

interactions, but without full contextual scrutiny, the level of influence is difficult to determine. These factors can provide great insight into composition pedagogy as well as for the writing process overall.

In recent years, composition scholars have come to recognize the act of composing as highly complex and influenced by many constantly shifting variables. Along with that recognition has come an increased interest in adapting research methodologies that will appropriately capture the many elements of the writing process. An ecological approach to composition research, as such, embraces methodological pluralism and outwardly engages in the process of interrogating the interaction of multiple contextual elements at once. Understood by some scholars as post-process and also as *ecomposition*, the approach is defined as “the study of the relationships between environments (and by that we mean natural, constructed, and even imagined places) and discourse (speaking, writing, and thinking)” (Weisser & Dobrin, 2001, 6).

Ecocomposition is invested in understanding how context and discursive practices shape each other and thus focuses on “experience, living texts, and interactive relationships as the central features of knowing, knowledge construction, and the legitimation of knowledge” (Boyd, 2011, 288). Interaction is at the basis of peer response activities, and heavily entrenched with displays of knowledge (i.e. uptake from previous knowledge/experience or instructor), ideally engaged in knowledge construction (i.e. students can collaborate on writing together), and interactive behaviors cue students toward legitimation (speech acts such as rejection or acceptance, choices of whether to integrate feedback, etc.). Within peer response, myriad elements become important when

considering context, and bring broader implications to surface. Adopting an ecocompositionist framework allows researchers to directly interrogate questions related to teaching and learning on the basis of relevant contextual variables directly.

The purpose of this study is to apply a contextualist ecological approach to further investigate peer response in multilingual composition classrooms. In an effort to more deeply explore peer response interactions as well as the effects these have on student writing development, the study aims to examine to what extent and how contextual variables actually shape types of peer interactions. The relationship between context and interaction is the primary emphasis, and therefore, the research questions are investigated through a variety of modes of inquiry. Thus, *interactional sociolinguistics* (Schiffrin, 1996) is used as an approach for its multifaceted nature in approaching data and context simultaneously. This method is developed from the work of Gumperz (1982) and joins discourse analysis with observational and ethnographic techniques. This approach lends itself to the examination of linguistic and contextual factors, while still supporting a qualitative and interpretive inquiry of dynamic classroom practices like peer response peer response.

In this study, contextual and discursive inquiries are further strengthened through the inclusion of interview protocols, interrogation of the relationship between instructor and peer discourse, and through investigation of reported student attitudes expressed in surveys and course evaluations. Findings reveal that there is indeed a relationship between contextual variable and discursive practices between peers and that “success” in such activities are determined in multiple ways. Such findings are framed within

implications related to both multilingual composition classroom contexts and peer response alike, while the conclusion proposes both pedagogical and methodological implications for future research.

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**CHAPTER 1:
APPLYING A CONTEXTUALIST APPROACH TO
MULTILINGUAL PEER RESPONSE RESEARCH**

- Tracy: You just really need to work on your paper.
Chad: Yea, ok. That's ok.
Tracy: But, maybe I'm not right.
Chad: But what do you think about like, I mean, you don't think it's well organized?
Tracy: Um, I mean, it's organized with comparing these two, but you know what I mean, I mean, if you are going to talk about this, it's organized, but you will need to reorganize. I mean if I just read the paper without looking at our prompt, then it is well organized. But if you are going to talk about this now, you will need to reorganize.
Chad: So, um, then reorganize it?
Tracy: Um, yea. I think so.
Chad: Uh. So you didn't get it? Like the children, the sons and daughters don't know who they're marrying. So I talked about how it's like not fair for them, like maybe, like looks might be terrible. Like the child, they don't have choice. You didn't get that? So I should like rewrite it?
Tracy: Yea.
Chad: Really?
Tracy: Explain more.
Chad: Explain more?
Tracy: Like...
Chad: Well I thought I explained it.

The exchange above took place between two students in a multilingual college composition course during a peer response activity. Both had agreed to be participants in a pilot research study using methods of Discourse Analysis to better understand the effectiveness of peer response tasks (Hobmeier, 2012). They were one of ten peer response pairs recorded several times over the span of a 10 week first-year writing course. This particular course was part of a newly formed composition support link for

Multilingual Language Learners (MLLs¹) in a large public four-year university. As part of this link, students are simultaneously enrolled in a First Year Composition course (a required university writing prerequisite for all students) and a mandatory Academic English Program course (for MLLs who did not meet the university TOEFL requirement). The study design initially had aimed to build upon previous work in both L1 and L2 peer response research, given its prevalence as a practice across classroom settings, with a focus on linguistically diverse students who have been thought to have unique challenges in interaction-based classroom activities. Further, newly formed composition contexts which have structured themselves uniquely to meet the needs of multilingual students are becoming more popular, and are thus in need of more critical examination in all facets of practice.

In regard to peer response research, which has been vast in both L1 and L2 settings, a popular area of inquiry has looked to “stance” as a determinant of interactive patterns and often a measure for “success” in the practice of student interaction in peer response. Such work on stance in multilingual peer response has been influential, and out of it has emerged descriptive categories designed to classify the common roles students enact towards each other while interacting in peer response. The underlying goals for the

¹ There are a variety of labels used to describe linguistically diverse populations in educational contexts (ESL, ELL, NNES, L2, etc.), each of them preferred or utilized for particular function or stance. To both recognize the resources students from language backgrounds other than English as a native language bring to learning and also to distinguish them uniquely as simultaneous learners of the English language, I have decided to use Multilingual Language Learner, or MLL, to describe a diverse population of students while still understanding that any label chosen will bring about connotations with linguistic ideologies and alignment with discursive histories and communities. Regardless of which labels are used, my choices are conscientiously reflective as it is important to critically engage with naming practices, and consider how they position students within the different contexts they inhabit. Such an understanding underscores much of the work of this study.

classification was to enable researchers and instructors to get a better sense of which interactive roles most supported or most prohibited successful interactions in peer response, “success” most frequently measured by assessing the relationship between these interactions and the writing process. The first set of categories to emerge were *interpretive*, *prescriptive*, and *collaborative*. These categories, however, have been recently critiqued for their limitations, especially in terms of their focus on the *description* rather than *explication* of peer interaction (Zhu & Mitchell, 2012). Such a critique is certainly worthwhile, as our understanding of the dynamism of classroom contexts grows. As such, my analysis of this data at that time also attempted to employ an alternative approach, one that looked to the presence of what has been regarded as academic confidence markers that seem to position students toward each other and the task at hand. The nature of peer comments in the above instance and others continued to reveal what can be interpreted as lacking confidence toward their respective stances, both as writers and thinkers (“*But what do you think about like, I mean, you don’t think it’s well organized?*”) as well as readers and respondents (“*But, maybe I’m not right...*”).

This issue of what I deemed “confidence” came up time and time again, but as I came to recognize, the data itself could not tell the full story. There seemed to be something quite complex going on, something that was not captured simply by categorizing the type of stance students had taken. And even when I attempted to put my own analytical frames in conversation with previous findings, most of the interactive elements in the exchange were found to correspond with an *interpretive* stance between reviewers, in which students share ranging reactions and evaluations of both each other

and themselves without communicatively responding to one another. Such a stance has been found in previous research to be less beneficial to peer response activities, and the same assessment could be extended here, where it seems students' lack of confidence at times interferes with their potential to collaborate with and probe one another in a productive way. But such a description was not bringing me any closer to understanding *why* Chad and Tracy could not seem to have a productive and more collaborative peer response interaction. Given the limitations of my data and method, all I could do was try to analyze more closely the conversation and look for answers.

In the above exchange, Tracy gives Chad advice about his paper, specifically referring to how he is not meeting the expectations for the prompt, but Chad continues to question and doubt her critique, ultimately affirming his own resistant stance. And while Tracy actually was giving Chad sound advice (he did, indeed, not meet the expectations for the prompt), Chad then failed to address any of Tracy's feedback in his subsequent draft.

What students "do" with peer response comments, or relationship to "uptake," has often been a focus for researchers on this topic, primarily because of the ways it pertains to the most common goals of peer response activities: those related to revision and the development of writing. In this case, utilizing previous models of evaluation would yield two potentially relevant conclusions: the use of an *interpretive* stance prohibited Chad and Tracy from successful interaction, and this was further evidenced by the lack of uptake. These two conclusions might lead us to believe that the activity had been unsuccessful, and lead us to further examination of the task design and implementation.

Yet such a conclusion doesn't necessarily bring us closer to truly understanding the nature of this interaction, thus making the attempt to simply modify the task somewhat misguided. Why was Chad being so resistant? Why was Tracy starting to doubt herself? Why didn't any comments get validated or integrated? How did these students perceive one another and the task at hand?

A closer examination of contextual factors reveals some important considerations. Firstly, of all the interactions in this study (where the average length of conversation was 18 minutes), this interaction was the longest (at 35 minutes), during which time feedback was resisted entirely, and Tracy's opinions were brought into question. As this pattern continued, Tracy began to doubt herself and back-peddle with comments such as "maybe I'm not right." In this instance, a lack of confidence and trust seemed to be highly prevalent, but why? Is this because the students are novice writers? Because they are both NNEs? Simply because they did not get along? Beyond just scrutinizing the conversational and textual elements in isolation, cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds are also important factors to investigate. One possible explanation for this interactive circumstance, for example, could reside in the background of these students. Chad is a Generation 1.5 Korean student who attended high school in the U.S., while Tracy is an international student from Taiwan who attended an English immersion high school, but has only been in the U.S. a few months.

Kang (2011) investigated a similar classroom environment (a support-based composition model linking English language courses to first-year writing courses) in the same university and concluded that often how students negotiated their own identities

was very closely related to their cultural, educational, and linguistic backgrounds. In her study, she found that some students positioned themselves as more competent students than their counterparts because of the NNES status, while others still resented their enrollment in a course they felt was “beneath” them and marked them as remedial. In Kang’s study, through stimulated recall, there was a correlation identified between students who went to high school in the U.S. and also held a negative bias toward the label of NNES. Many of these students in fact felt that NNEs were associated with a sense of stigma, while the international students in the study who were new to the U.S. did not internalize the same stigma, a finding concurrent with previous research (Blanton, 1999; Goen, Porter, Swanson, & VanDommelen, 2002; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008). In the case of Chad and Tracy above, such identity negotiation might be related to how their interaction unfolded. If Chad already positioned himself as more competent than Tracy, and resented being in this class in the first place, an interaction in which Tracy makes suggestions to him is likely to be ill-received. Other scholars such as Nelson and Carson (2006) have investigated peer response and group power dynamics in relation to sociocultural constructions of identity and have found factors such as language, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status to often have palpable impact on how students perceive and interact with one another. Further, they found that students of more culturally and linguistically homogenous backgrounds fared better in group interaction, a finding also potentially relevant in Chad and Tracy’s interaction (Chad is Korean and Tracy is Chinese). Despite the criticism that thinking about individuals in such a way leads to cultural essentialism and the exploitation of stereotypes (Kubota, 1999), the

power of such constructions is undeniable and should be treated as a resource to better understand interactive inequities in the wake of socially constructed identities. Future studies on this topic must take such issues into account and to interrogate them further, but what, methodologically, can bring about better understanding?

Although many scholars recognize that sociocultural factors must be considered when attempting to understand the types of complex discursive interactions that occur between multilingual students in peer response, researches must also attend to other circumstantial factors included in the interactional context. Several months after the conversation between Chad and Tracy occurred, I learned that Chad had plagiarized the essay he used in this peer response activity. This circumstance sheds new light and brings a greater level of complexity toward Chad's resistance and Tracy's self-doubt alike. It also brings into question perhaps why Chad chose not to utilize Tracy's feedback. It may have had very little to do with her or this interaction at all. And while it is unlikely that sociocultural factors have no bearing on his actions and demeanor (the relationship between culture and plagiarism is a widely studied phenomenon), without a study design that includes a dynamic set of research tools poised to interrogate multiple intersecting and coexisting contextual elements, it is difficult to assess this peer response interaction further. Given the rapidly shifting classroom demographics taking place across U.S. universities, the need for greater insight into such peer interaction is imperative, because it not only informs practice but also allows for a thicker understanding of the student populations we teach in multilingual composition settings, where there is often a pronounced gap between composition instructors and students, both on the level of

writing experience and language proficiency. Thus, it has become apparent that any attempt to reexamine and perhaps reposition peer response in multilingual composition contexts must derive from a modified methodology that can account more fully for the interconnectivity between constantly shifting contextual variables. This dissertation brings such an ecological perspective to bear on the study of peer response.

The pilot study example of Tracy and Chad presents just one instance where the complexity of interaction was revealed alongside the recognition that perhaps peer response itself is much more complex as well. It is prudent to note that despite being unable to elaborate upon all of the interactions, much of the findings of the initial study appeared to be quite disappointing and even, at times, grim. Not only did it appear that the peer response interactions were not effective in most cases, but it brought into question task design and implementation as well as revealed limitations of a study design that focused solely on discourse interactions. However, a survey administered as part of the pilot study revealed that most students found value in the task, even if they mostly saw the function as “finding and fixing” errors and did somewhat bring into question the value of working with a multilingual partner. Nonetheless, such a finding brought cause for question about student perceptions of the task. Furthermore, there were some elements of the data that showed some potentially productive facets of peer interaction that came through metalinguistic moves that facilitated language learning or metacognition about the target language. Here is one instance between Tracy and Chad:

Tracy: Yea, I don't know what the “pro” means.

Chad: Oh, “pro” is the positive things and “con” is the negative things

These metalinguistic moves happened in relation to writing-based conversations, but also at times in tangential off-task conversations, which could be viewed as not only having value in language learning but also in rapport building and affiliation. Take, for example, this interaction between another pair, Zang and Krista, that took place after they finished their peer response activity:

Zang: Oh. Which class?
Krista: Oh, I had it for Atmospheric Science.
Zang: Huh?
Krista: Atmospheric Science.
Zang: Physics?
Krista: Atmospheric Science.
Zang: Mmmmm. I'm not familiar. Are you a freshman?
Krista: Ummm, yea.
Zang: Why are you taking classes I have never heard of?
Krista: You've never heard of Atmospheric Science? Really?
Zang: How do you spell that first phrase?
Krista: Atmospheric. Like A-T...like atmosphere. Like climate change...
Zang: Oh!
Krista: Like global warming, weather...
Zang: *(Laughing)*
Krista: Everything like that!
Zang: Oh.

In this short sample, Zang and Krista affiliate and relate with each other as students, they build rapport by laughing and interacting together, and Krista teaches Zang something connected to the target language, in this case, English. Although there were only three interactions like this in the data, such exchanges could indicate a growing comfort and fulfillment of the socialization aim of the task itself and certainly support a greater attempt to understand these interactions through adapting research methods with the ultimate goal of potentially reimagining how instructors view and implement peer response activities overall.

1.1 Lessons Learned from the Initial Pilot

Regarding task design, it is obviously of importance in classroom practice to assess the effectiveness of the task in relation to how it was executed in terms of goals. L2 classroom interaction researchers have highlighted this necessity as connected to understanding the relationship between pedagogic aim and language use (van Lier, 1988a; Seedhouse, 2004). In this particular study, it was found in most cases that the activity of students did not entirely follow task design. For example, only three of the ten pairs recorded utilized the orientation questions, questions which asked them to discuss the expectations of the assignment, identify what they thought they were doing well, and express areas where they felt they still needed work. Specifically, most neglected the portion where they are prompted to compliment themselves and one another. In fact, several groups began to read each other's papers immediately without talking first at all.

Of the ten pairs, two of the groups did not use peer response sheets as instructed, and most sheets were filled out minimally. One reason for this is likely the framing of the activity as "low stakes," one where no real consequences bear on lack of output from the task. Further, aside from the days where certain groups were recorded, usually interactions went largely unmonitored. However, though the data revealed that some conversational digression from the task did occur, conversations about writing, the assignments, and language seemed to be occurring the majority of the time. This finding corresponds with previous research in this way, especially in how it could indicate an embraced opportunity toward participation in "unrehearsed, low-risk, exploratory talk,

which is less feasible in whole-class or teacher-student interactions” (Ferris, 2003, p. 130), and could be affirmational toward the students’ engagement with the activity, something that could be explored in depth with a more developed and contextually-probing research tool.

However, this finding also raises an important question in relation to the value of interrogating the relationship between task design and discursive practices further in L2 composition contexts. Is attention to task design and implementation enough? Research has shown fairly consistently that training seems to have a correlation to greater success in peer response activities, but looking more closely at interactions reveals that even with extensive training and preparation as well as while being monitored, students stray from the task and avoid particular key elements. This could imply there is something else going on at the level of discourse, and although it is excellent advice that instructors should aim to design and implement tasks most optimally for students, researchers should be pushing further to explore the interrelatedness of task design, activity, and students perceptions, especially in the space of new classroom environments, where other factors unlike those in previous studies are at work.

Students are of course influenced by task instruction, but their interactions are also implicitly influenced by student-teacher discourse they have participated in throughout the course, a conclusion supported in similar studies, but not in a substantial way (Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Howard, 2001). Further, while the negotiation between student utilization of peer feedback vs. instructor feedback has been more extensively explored, the direct influence that the instructor discursive practices feedback has in

modeling the type of discourse students exchange has not been explored as significantly (only Casanave & Asavenage, 1994). For example, such questions emerge as relevant: how does instructor feedback on student writing discursively impact student interactions in peer review? Does it help them to build authority? Or does it merely illuminate their lack of mastery in the discourse of feedback? Some of the findings from the pilot study, in fact, have revealed a need for further inquiry into this topic. One such example of this can be viewed in the praise/criticism with coordinating conjunction “but” model. With 25 instances, the move was common enough to take note. One explanation for this might have to do with a relationship to the “face-saving” strategies students often employed when engaging in critique. However, there is evidence to support that there is also a relationship to their exposure to similar discursive moves in the teacher student discourse. For example, in most of the written feedback they receive each week, students’ end comments usually include a sentence structure in which a more general piece of praise is joined with a piece of specific criticism joined using the coordinating conjunction “but.” Hyland and Hyland (2001) have noted the frequency of this discursive practice amongst composition instructors in feedback, identifying how teachers commonly syntactically subordinate criticism to praise. For example, “I really like your topic, but I am not sure it is appropriate for the assignment,” or “I think you have some strong evidence, but it is not clear how it supports your claim.” After some experience with this rhetorical move, it is likely that students’ strategies for giving feedback has been influenced by the model that they have been exposed to, and thus provides an opportunity to “recontextualize” this discourse in their peer-to-peer interactions. Such mimicking has also been pointed to in

writing center research (Calhoun Bell & Youmans, 2006), where peer tutors utilize similar response strategies as those they have experienced in their own classrooms while tutoring their peers. Since it is unlikely that this population of students has ever participated in a context quite like this one, it seems only natural they would take their cues on how to critique a paper by using the ways in which their own papers have been critiqued.

Another place where this recontextualization can be viewed is in the actual level of criticism given. While students were explicitly asked to articulate what was being done well in their partners' papers, most did not do this. In fact, direct criticisms made up approximately 1/6 of the data in comparison to less than 1/10 of praise. Disconcerting while this may be, again, there seemed to be a possible connection to how feedback had been previously framed in teacher-student discourse, whereby each draft they are returned employs about a 1:10 praise to criticism ratio, on average. However, while students do seem to be emulating this discourse, it is not being utilized in the same way as students engage with instructor feedback. The basis for this conclusion comes through the initial study on lacking uptake and the moves displayed by students in which they would outwardly question the feedback of their peers.

Given this trend, why might this be? As has been previously suggested, there is frequently a falsely attributed correlation between language proficiency and expertise, a correlation that is often strongly determined by perceptions of nativeness. And while scholars are astutely able to disregard this causation (Brutt-Griffler & Sammimy, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999; Faez, 2011; Higgins, 2003; Kachru & Nelson, Mahoob, 2005; 1996;

Phillipson, 1992; Rampton, 1990; Curtis & Romney, 2010), there is evidence here to suggest that students in this particular learning environment are not experienced or nuanced enough to do so. Furthermore, such a suggestion might seem contradictory in a context where their presence in such a course is solely determined by their documented linguistic “inadequacy.” Students’ attitudes toward NNESTs have been an area of interest for scholars in ELT and composition for some time, and while some discriminations and judgments related to nativeness have been found (Moussu, 2010), studies show that usually negative attitudes are more initial and rarely sustained through the advancement of a course. This would certainly support the idea of a false dichotomy between nativeness and language proficiency, but what about on the peer-to-peer level, where students also lack the symbolic capital of teacher authority to underscore their statuses? This is one aspect of the issue that has been minimally investigated.

Therefore, the question of not just whether or not but how much MLLs in an L2 composition classroom enact judgments toward one another on the basis of an ill-perceived connection between nativeness and presumed proficiency becomes a highly relevant one. A particular point of interest⁴ is how this phenomenon seemingly impacts students’ confidence toward each other as well as to their self-confidence in giving advice. My pilot study research established discursive evidence that reveals students’ lack of confidence as writers and thinkers as well as readers and critiquers. I also found trends in students’ tendencies not to integrate suggestions from peers, something that may be related to the levels of confidence and lacking trust the peers share. But what is still not entirely clear is: What is undergirding this apparent lack of confidence and trust? In

order to gain a thicker understanding, it is essential to continue investigating this practice with a more dynamic and refined set of methodological tools, a set of tools that will allow for more ecological insight into the types of interactions students are having in multilingual composition settings.

The most important and notable conclusion from my initial pilot research into multilingual peer response was the recognition that we need more robust and interdisciplinary research and research method development in this area. Each finding from this study revealed unanswered questions. Among the findings, it was revealed that uptake between peer feedback and subsequent drafts was occurring minimally in the context and constraints explored. However, this was not to say that students were not integrating feedback at another time, that they may have consciously decided not to integrate regardless of perception of their peer, or that were in fact making few changes overall. Without further contextual interrogation, it is difficult to know. Previous research in this area has confirmed that students often do use multiple sources for feedback (Chaudron, 1983; Mittan, 1989), and, as a result, there are similarly inconclusive and disputed findings in relation to how and when students utilize feedback from peer review (Berger, 1990; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994). Further, it is important to note that despite the seeming lack of uptake in this data set, through a survey study administered at the end of the course, most students did indicate feeling value in the activity, a finding concurrent with previous research about students' attitudes toward the process (Leki, 1990; Mangelsdorf, 1992; Mendonca & Johnson). This could be indicative of other valuable components beyond uptake and, as

other researchers have concluded, is likely related to the priorities modeled by the instructor in feedback and task design (Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Howard, 2001), though this is certainly an area that needs to be investigated more closely. It is important to note in this particular design that uptake was not stressed as the primary goal of the task, so students may indeed have found value in other arenas, such as the ability to discuss assignments, the exposure to other students' work, the opportunity to clarify ideas and self-reflect, not to mention the chance to build rapport and possibly learn about the target language through interaction. However, the prolific student stance toward correctness in this data set also may indicate a misalignment between instructor and student goals. This misalignment points to another area in need of research because, in spite of most practical materials aimed at multilingual composition instructors that present potential pitfalls of peer response and highlight the need for effective task design, in the wake of shifting demographics and expectations, it is time to revisit this issue more thoroughly.

The pedagogical implications and limitations of the initial pilot study paved the way for the formation of a new approach to investigating peer response, particularly with the goal of researching classrooms contexts where linguistic diversity is at the forefront and in need of greater understanding. The conclusions drawn revealed the need for a research model that can account for the impact of contextual factors on multilingual interactions. Beyond utilizing the tools of Discourse Analysis, this dissertation study attempts to account for context in a more fully realized manner, by strengthening its analysis through the utilization of stimulated recall and interview protocols, applying greater interrogation of the relationship between instructor and

peer discourse, exploring alternative peer response models (such as computer-mediated), as well as by looking to the comparison of data in L2 contexts and mixed L1/L2 composition contexts. With such an approach, some light can hopefully be shed upon a ubiquitous composition classroom activity that continues to challenge researchers and practitioners alike, especially in the wake of ever-shifting student demographics.

1.2 Peer Response in Composition: The Need for a Contextualist Approach

Peer response is a well-established facet of composition pedagogy, and has often been shown to be beneficial for students in a variety of linguistically diverse learning environments. However, research and experience alike has continued to reveal that levels of investment and engagement vary, as do both students' and instructors' confidence in its usefulness as a practice. These inconsistencies can cause apprehension on the part of the instructor and worse yet, fail to meet students' needs or expectations for their learning. The research to date has attempted to reconcile the variation, and has generally identified task design and implementation as the single-most important variable contributing to success in peer response. And while task design and implementation often include important factors such as how to assign groups and concern with revision-based uptake, for example, such a focus on task, as I've discussed so far, can exclude the consideration of other variables, such as student incomes, attitudes, and material conditions, among others. In order to attempt to more fully understand this highly interactive and complex classroom activity, it is imperative to consider as many variables as possible, especially in attempts to better understand student experiences and their relationship to the instructor-curated tasks and classroom contexts. Particularly in multilingual

composition environments, context-specific variables related to linguistic and cultural factors are heightened, and can greatly influence how students interact. For example, different academic experiences and cultural ideologies as well as varying language proficiency might impact students' motivations and attitudes toward interactions, but without full contextual scrutiny, the level of influence is difficult to determine. This critique has been echoed recently by Zhu and Mitchell (2012) who recognize the importance of pursuing such a question as intertwined with the goal of adding breadth to understanding students' interactions in peer response. With the aim of further scrutinizing underlying motivation toward stances in particular, they adopted Activity Theory as an interpretive framework because it offers a model that recognizes the need to investigate human behaviors in sociocultural contexts (Kaptelinin, 2005). As such, Activity Theory (Leont'ev 1978) goes beyond attempting to just describe behaviors through interaction, but rather aims to understand them by interrogating the relationships between goals, motives, and activities, especially within particular contexts and under specific conditions. Building upon work in second language studies that revealed better understanding of the interactions between multilingual students in classroom contexts based upon the investigation of the ways in which learner motives influence orientations and approaches to particular tasks (Coughlan & Duff, 1994; Donato, 2000; Roebuck, 2000; Storch, 2004), Zhu and Mitchell (2012) applied the same approach to peer response tasks, while recognizing that tools used to understand such tasks, especially those taking place between multilingual learners, have been limited in a number of ways. Their study ultimately concludes that researchers in this area must adopt tools that will allow them to gain a deeper understanding of both how students participate in tasks and what influences their participation,

something that can contribute more successfully to our own pedagogical development. An Activity Theory perspective calls on us to develop multifaceted research models.

Zhu & Mitchell's study highlights the fact that few studies have attempted to draw together multiple factors in order to establish what accounts for "success," or lack thereof, in peer response across contexts. Further, narrow and limited investigations focused on predetermined descriptive categories of participation like interactional stances or examination of specific individual skills like revision uptake often prohibit researchers from seeing the full potential of an activity beyond its intended pedagogic purpose. For example, if a peer response activity is designed to help students improve claims, research of the task may only be concerned with looking at the development of claim, while factors such as student motivation and academic literacy development could be highly pertinent, despite students' appearance of fulfilling or not fulfilling the immediate expectations of the task. Are there sociocultural factors impeding our understanding of the task performance? Are there benefits to the task, particularly related to multilingual students, such as language development or academic socialization, that are currently escaping us? Thus, in an effort to more fully examine peer response interaction in multilingual composition environments from a multi-variable contextual perspective, I propose bringing an ecological perspective to Discourse Analysis (DA) in order to study one multi-faceted and interactive task (peer review) and its orientation within a complex classroom and institutional environment.

DA has long been a tool used to investigate classroom discourse and interactions, particularly because of the way it lends itself to studying talk-in-interaction alongside task-based activities. Peer Response activities often have goals founded in conversation, and

outcomes and “products” are difficult to measure without studying the nature of the conversations themselves. Thus, many researchers have been drawn to variations of DA as a method of analyzing the conversations taking place with the goal of understanding writing processes and the classroom-based activities designed to support them more thoroughly. However, employing single method DA approaches often fails to encapsulate the complexity of a task such as peer response, one rooted in the transference of “conversations” into the tangible development of writing. Such a circumstance is further complicated by the linguistic diversification of composition classrooms nationwide and the recognition that sociocultural factors do indeed influence interactions. This is a need to investigate not just what is happening *in* peer response, but what is happening *around* it, both literally and metaphorically, both spatially and temporally.

In an effort to more deeply understand the interaction during peer response that occurs in linguistically diverse composition classrooms as well as the effects such interactions have on student writing development, the study aims to explore the following overarching question:

To what extent and how do contextual variables (task design and implementation, discursive practices, reported student attitudes, instructor feedback, material conditions?, etc.) shape types of peer interactions during peer response between linguistically diverse populations in multilingual composition classroom environments?

In other words, what *is* the relationship between context and experience when students engage in peer response interactions in multilingual composition environments? How are different contextual factors negotiated in discourse? What connections and patterns can be illuminated through deeper ecological scrutiny? In order to undertake such an inquiry, it is essential to utilize various transdisciplinary models spanning across composition, second

language studies, and discourse analysis in order to develop an appropriately multifaceted approach.

For this study, it is the context-orientation and situatedness of DA approaches that are used both to facilitate analysis at the level of discourse and to provide a pathway toward broader ecological inquiries, something that will be discussed in greater methodological detail in Chapter 2. In the rest of this chapter, I will outline some of the pertinent scholarship necessary to frame peer response interaction while highlighting the need for a newly adapted research model. Finally, I propose a study design suited for a contextualist inquiry into multilingual peer response interaction. By doing so, I hope to establish a call to both compositionists and second-language practitioners and researchers alike to embrace our field's experiential pluralism by integrating more complex and transdisciplinary methods and pedagogical approaches that can account for the contextual dynamism our ever globalizing classroom environments present us.

1.3 Peer Response Research

Peer response activities are commonplace within the space of the modern composition classroom and have been a popular area of research amongst L1 and L2 practitioners alike. Among its goals in practice, it has been argued that such activities allow students to take active learning roles (Mendonca & Johnson, 1994), provide students with “real audiences” (Leki, 1990; Mittan, 1989; Ruggles Gere, 1987), and give meaning to their texts through socially-interactive negotiations (Ferris & Hedgecock, 2005; Liu & Hansen, 2002; Nystrand, 1989). However, despite widespread acceptance and use, some practitioners are still critical of

whether this mode of collaboration is effective or not, particularly amongst certain groups of students, namely, NNESSs. Furthermore, students themselves often express doubt about the utility of peer response within the context of their personal and course-related goals. Of particular interest to scholars is the interrogation of the often inevitable unbalanced power relationships that arise in group work (Nelson & Carson, 2006; Trimbur, 1989), as well as the examination of more specific interactional issues such as the quality of peer comments, their effect on the revision process, and the best methods for conducting peer response (Ede & Lundsford, 1996; Belcher, 2000).

More broadly, researchers and instructors alike have identified the contradictory nature of peer response, an activity engaged in the simultaneous interest of socialization and the practice of criticism, something that can impede group membership (Roskelly, 2000). While the inconsistencies in design and variance in student response and engagement are relevant regardless of context, particular issues arise and even become more pronounced when moving beyond a traditional L1 composition environment. As composition classrooms nationwide have been rapidly linguistically diversifying, research on MLLs' experiences with established practices has been just as steadily increasing. Studying peer response, for example, has been of particular interest to L2 composition scholars in the past who have recognized that MLLs may experience cultural confusion and linguistic barriers can interfere with learning and task-based goals (Leki, 1990; Nelson & Carson, 1998; Zhang, 1995). For example, it has been established that many MLLs experience a high level of anxiety in peer response, especially in mixed L1/L2 contexts and when compared to MLLs in an all MLL environment (Murau, 1993). Other issues that have been found to arise in mixed L1/L2 settings is the dominance of L1 turn taking

and difficulty amongst MLLs competing for turns, not to mention specific linguistic barriers such as difficulty with clarification and elicitation in interactive response (Zhu, 2001).

In spite of some documented issues like these, there has been fairly widely established support in favor of peer response activities not only in mixed L1/L2 settings, but especially in L2 dominant classroom contexts. In contrast to Murau (1993), some research (Leki, 1990; Mittan, 1989) has supported collaborative practices in composition for their role in helping MLLs to develop confidence and reduce apprehension in the classroom. Likewise, peer response practices have been found to have myriad benefits in both affective and social spheres, as well as in cognitive and metacognitive development (Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996). Many studies over the last two decades, in fact, have concerned themselves with studying these benefits in L2 contexts and have found that peer feedback can be helpful at any stage of the writing process, is often complimentary to teacher feedback (Zamel, 1985), and can facilitate the process of writing through revision (Chaudron, 1984; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Berg 1999).

Along these lines, the relationship between peer feedback and student uptake in subsequent revisions has been a popular area of inquiry, not only aiming to see whether or not uptake was occurring, but to what extent, when, and of what benefit to student writing (Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Paulus, 1999; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1998). One study looked specifically at uptake in L2 composition and found that most students valued advice and took it, but that poor advice was often given (Asraf, 1999). In this case, it was posited that higher proficiency was important for the task, especially since critique and self-reflection are often considered to be high-level linguistic skills. Additional research has

questioned the relationship between language limitations and the quality of peer feedback (Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Leki, 1990; Nelson & Carson, 1998) while some have also specifically examined uptake (Asraf, 1999; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Nelson & Carson, 1998; Rollinson, 1998; Villalil & Guerrero, 1998). Results have been varied and particularly highlighted the relationship between uptake and proficiency. In particular, higher language proficiency levels have generally produced more “successful” interaction. Given the goal of peer feedback (typically, to help support the writing process), the connection between interaction and uptake still remains a highly relevant one, and beyond just the issue of determining what the relationship is and how it influences writing production, on the affective level, the connection to students’ implicitly performed and reported attitudes in this endeavor is also one of great importance, as these factors may have some bearing on the nature of the interaction. Furthermore, because of the multilingual context, interrogating the relationship between actual language proficiency and perceived proficiency, especially at the peer-to-peer level, is essential in this inquiry. In the past, methods such as surveys have shed some light on the topic, but oftentimes, without attunement toward context, researchers are left to inference when examining conversations whilst trying to understand such a complex notion.

As aforementioned, some studies have attempted to examine student perspectives in a primarily L2 context (Jacobs, Curtis, Braine, & Huang, 1998; Nelson & Carson, 1998; Mangelsdorf, 1992; Leki, 1991; Tang & Tithecott, 1999; Tsui & Ng, 2000 Zhang, 1995); and while conclusions have been inconsistent, studies do raise important issues that bring into question the relationship between the perceived proficiency, competency and subsequent trust between reviewers, establishing its necessity for further exploration. Zhang (1995) proposes

that the lack of trust indicated likely has a relationship to the value placed on the accuracy, sincerity, and specificity of comments exchanged, while Leki (1991) shows that peer feedback is often determined inadequate and unuseful by MLLs, especially when compared to the teacher's comments, the comments of Native Speakers (NSs), and in some cases, even considered less valuable than grammar books. Preference for teacher feedback over peers' has been a common finding in research, with students often identifying their own lack of expertise as the reason for such a stance (Amores, 1997; Chaudron, 1984; Sengupta, 1998; Zhang, 1995). These perceptions have been thought to relate to the effectiveness of the task, and bring into question the overall value of L2 peer collaboration (Nelson & Carson, 1998). The issue of nativeness becomes a point of interest here as well, where the question of whether student perceptions have a relationship to their own perceived identities as Non-Native English Speakers (NNESs) has some bearing on their willingness and confidence to collaborate. Furthermore, the impact of these perceptions in relation to their peers is highly relevant, especially in regards to who has perceived authority, or who is perceived as qualified, to give peer feedback. It might be assumed, for example, that only those who are native speakers of English or the teachers themselves are qualified to give comments on the English writing of a NNES. In fact, some studies (Amores, 1997; Jacobs, 1987) have pointed to the embodiment of "teacher roles" on the part of students in peer response as a potential source of tension in peer interaction.

Such a circumstance is highlighted in composition courses where multilingual enrollment has greatly increased recently and might become even more relevant when turning to new composition models such as sections of composition designed exclusively for MLLs.

Writing programs are facing new challenges as a result of these demographic shifts, and many are eager to embrace new programmatic approaches. However, it is unclear based on the research so far what new models best suit MLL writers. Some scholars in the field purport that students will benefit more from an all L2 learning environment (Braine, 1993; McKay, 1981), while others still suggest that cross-cultural interactions that occur between NSs and NNEs in a mixed L1/L2 composition environments are more productive for MLLs (Matsuda & Silva, 1999; Roy, 1984; 1988). Studies in peer response have built upon research comparing these environments, with some research showing that MLLs participate less in mixed L1/L2 environments (Zhu, 2001), while others (Huang, 1995; Oded, Connor, & Asons, 2002; Vilamil & Guerrero, 1996) affirming peer response as more productive in an all L2 environment where students share an L1. This issue remains complex, and is further complicated by factors of placement and student preference. Exploring these contexts further has become essential because of the way new models are complicating the traditional notions of what constitutes the space of the multilingual classroom (where students may or may not share an L1), bringing into question the relevance of previous research as well as the appropriateness and effectiveness of common and longstanding approaches and practices in such environments. Peer response is one such area in need of reexamination. While it is evident from the previous research reviewed that there has been substantial and valuable research in peer response, particularly in L2 studies, the research has been varied and not attempted to engage a more fully contextual approach. By only interrogating one factor (language background or stance, for example) or by only using one method (e.g. surveys or textual analysis), much is lost in the midst of such a complex dynamic activity.

Further, the historical genealogy of peer response has been brought into question, something significant because while the task has most frequently been associated with process pedagogies, student-centered teaching approaches and collaborative learning theories, it has alternatively been suggested that peer response activities have a closer alignment with practices founded in recitation and correction (Ching, 2007). Such a suggestion indicates a potential source of conflict in a well-established practice and proposes a need to look deeper into what goals undergird the task and what constitutes “success” in peer response interactions. This idea of “success” might further be complicated when observing a potential misalignment between instructor and student goals, something potentially exacerbated in linguistically diverse learning environments. At stake is what has been identified as a potential impediment to student agency, and my interest in more closely examining both the uptake of teacher discourse in student interactions as well as student interactional markers and perceptions as they relate to expertise and authority will hopefully shed light on this issue.

Task design and implementation has been traditionally targeted when looking at “unsuccessful” peer response activities, and while students are undoubtedly influenced by task instruction, as noted earlier, it is also plausible that student interactions are implicitly influenced by student-teacher discourse they have participated in throughout the course, a conclusion supported in similar studies, but not in a substantial way (Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Howard, 2001). Further, while the negotiation between student utilization of peer feedback vs. instructor feedback has been more extensively explored, the direct influence that the instructor feedback has in modeling the type of discourse students exchange has not been explored as significantly (only Casanave & Asavenage, 1994). Such discursive mimicking has

been pointed to in writing center research (Calhoun Bell & Youmans, 2006), where peer tutors utilize similar response strategies as those they have experienced in their own classrooms while tutoring their peers. Since it is probable that many MLLs are new to peer response activities, it seems only natural they would take their cues on how to critique a paper by using the ways in which their own papers have been critiqued. In peer response interactions, the following questions emerge as relevant: how does instructor feedback discursively impact student interactions? Does it help them to build authority? Or does it merely illuminate their lack of mastery in the discourse of feedback? This study can contribute further to these types of questions, helping instructors to better understand the way their own discursive practices shape those of their students, and aim to develop an environment which further promotes student agency and full engagement with the task, hopefully both meeting student expectations and equipping students with applicable and transferable writing based skills.

How students transfer what is gleaned from peer response interactions is still a question in need of further interrogation. Previous research in this area has confirmed that students often do use multiple sources for feedback (Chaudron, 1983; Mittan, 1989), and, as a result, there are similarly inconclusive and disputed findings in relation to how and when students utilize feedback from peer response (Berger, 1990; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994). Uptake, however, is often not the only take-away from peer response, nor should it be. There are often other valuable interactional and skill-based goals, outcomes likely related to the priorities modeled by the instructor in feedback and task design (Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Howard, 2001), though this is certainly an area that needs to be investigated more closely. A contextual research model such as I am proposing will allow for not only

investigation of the primary goal of the task, but also looks to what other productive learning is taking place at the level of discourse such as the ability to discuss assignments, the exposure to other students' work, the opportunity to clarify ideas and self-reflect, not to mention the chance to build rapport and possibly learn about the target language through interaction. However, there is often a prolific student stance toward correctness in peer response that may interfere with outcomes and indicate a misalignment between instructor and student goals. This misalignment points to another area in need of greater research in the wake of shifting demographics and expectations, it is time to revisit this issue more thoroughly.

As has been supported by many experts in the field (Berg, 1999; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Mittan, 1989; Stanley, 1992), the work of this study also brings into question task design quite explicitly. It is evident from this study and previous work that peer response can pose some substantial barriers for student learning, and in some cases, these outweigh the benefits, especially when the scaffolding needed to prepare some MLLs often proves too great a challenge. These barriers are at times exaggerated in unique L2 classroom contexts, and, considering the appropriateness of peer response in certain environment, still remains a pertinent issue. Because there is great variance in the research, scholars caution against determining such collaborative models as entirely inappropriate for MLL writers (Ferris, 2003), despite some suggestions to the contrary (e.g. Nelson & Carson, 1998; Zhang, 1995). Indeed, how language differences influence interaction (attitudinally and discursively) is still an area in need of greater scrutiny in regard to peer response, and researchers should be not only developing methods to encapsulate a greater understanding of language and identity during peer response, but also making attempts to reexamine such activities so that they can be

utilized by practitioners in a way that supports and builds upon language differences, rather than ignores them.

One potential area for development looks to computer-mediated peer response in IM, email, discussion boards, and blogs as a possible way to promote linguistic production, reduce the prevalence of face-threat, and even utilize anonymity if so desired. Recent studies have shown some success in such implementation, especially in promoting more dynamic interaction between MLLs (Jin & Zhu, 2010) and supporting collaborative learning goals in conjunction with writing skills (Liou & Peng, 2009; Strasma, 2009). Obviously, appropriate access to resources and technological proficiency are prerequisites for such task development, and given the newness of digital interaction, it is necessary to investigate the practice further. Other progressive research on peer response builds on work in collaboration and sociocultural theory, work that critiques the static usage of peer response in composition and instead advocates for sustained collaboration throughout the entire writing process as a way to facilitate language learning and development (Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009). Such types of collaboration have been shown to improve writing accuracy and promote reflection and meta-cognition, especially when compared to individual writing production in the same setting (Swain, 2000, 2001; Dobao, 2012). Dialogue in particular has been pointed to as a resource for mediating learning, and perhaps it is the student investment in such a high stakes project that leads to a reduction in power imbalance. However, depending on the objectives for a specific course, as well as curricular constraints, such an endeavor may not be feasible. Particularly in the courses examined in this study, where students are primarily evaluated through their individually comprised portfolios, sustained group projects would not fit the

grading parameters. Furthermore, as a course invested in transferability designed to prepare students for academic and professional writing outside of the context of this class, it might be difficult to justify. On the other hand, if only one of the many projects students work on, such a collaboration might mirror future collaborative writing tasks they might experience in real-life settings. Either way, such a shift would require a reevaluation of commonplace and stable practices like peer response in composition, and perhaps that is what is needed most at this crucial time in demographic change.

In the contemporary multilingual composition context, perhaps we need to reconceptualize the function of peer response, and orient students to see the value beyond “finding and fixing” errors while simultaneously challenging ourselves to elevate our discourse positively in feedback to reflect this value. Beyond this, reconceptualizing peer response in multilingual contexts might entail also reframing the way “successful” peer response is evaluated by instructors. Findings from my pilot study suggest that peer response had potential in helping students in other ways beyond the concrete and measurable writing process, for example building confidence, practicing “social interaction” (Casanave, 1995), developing metacognition, co-constructing academic discourse knowledge and even helping students with facets of the target language. In this way, although they are negotiating authority and identity as academic writers (an often challenging and frustrating process), they are on the path to constructing a new sense of identity and authority, one that may afford them a “toolkit” for future discursive interactions. However, many of these aspects still remain at odds with peer response as an activity amongst many researchers, instructors, and students, as it is currently envisioned, something that may connect to both its design and implementation, as well as its pedagogical history.

1.4 Interactive Socialization and Sociolinguistic Competence

Given the ambivalence already established in relation to peer response in more “traditional” L1 composition contexts (Roskelly, 2000), issues seem likely to occur at both the level of instruction and the level of interaction in L2 and mixed L1/L2 composition environments. For instance, it might be the case that pedagogical assumptions actually interfere or conflict with student expectations and attitudes, a circumstance that might manifest during interactions and is likely influenced by a number of factors. But how do these factors actually impact the discursive practices of students in peer response in these multilingual environments? While linguistic proficiency influences placement, performance, and perception in many ways, what has been identified as a potentially more significant barrier to the academic success of MLLs is a lacking familiarity with the larger American university culture and specific disciplinary subcultures (Schneider & Fujishima, 1995; Angelova & Riasantseva, 1999). Sociolinguistic competence, or the way language is appropriately used and understood differently on the basis of interactional conventions (Canale, 1983), is pointed to as an important element in academic enculturation. Successful academic enculturation in many disciplines, such as composition, has been identified as highly dependent upon students’ abilities to change their relationships with reading and writing, particularly in the ways texts are expected to be a vehicle for interaction between instructors and peers alike. In past research MLLs have been found to struggle with such a shift (Angelova & Riasantseva, 1999), indicating a difficulty in developing the “interactive socialization” (Casanave, 2002) often necessary for successful participation in specific academic communities and interactive tasks such as peer response.

This aspect of academic development is important, and linguistically diverse composition classroom environments represent a context in which interactive socialization may be an even greater challenge for its students, particularly through the way placement and labeling may shape their self-perceptions and the perceptions of their peers. Institutional labeling has been identified as a source of tension for some students who reject being positioned as a NNES (Blanton, 1999; Goen, Porter, Swanson, & VanDommelen, 2002; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008), a circumstance that could present potential barriers in interaction. And while some research alternatively shows an enthusiasm and preference toward being labeled in such a way (Blanton, 1999; Contino & Hyun; Goen, Porter, Swanson, & VanDommelen, 2002; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008), these students may still suffer from lacking the experience necessary for optimal response exchanges. Finally, in the case of MLLs coming from certain types of academic backgrounds, it has been noted that the transition for some into critical-thinking based FYC courses has been identified as a particularly challenging shift (Atkinson and Ramanathan, 1995). Given these contextual factors, a closer examination of interaction with these factors in mind is warranted.

1.5 Ecological and Contextualist Approaches to Composition Research

To design a study that engages multiple contextual variables at once, it is necessary to utilize a diverse and multifaceted theoretical framework. In recent years, composition scholars have come to recognize the act of composing as a highly complex and interactive endeavor, one entrenched within and influenced by many constantly shifting variables. Along with that recognition has come an increased interest in adapting research methodologies that will appropriately capture the many facets of the process that both involves writing and learning to

write. An ecological approach to composition research, as such, embraces methodological pluralism and outwardly engages in the process of interrogating the interaction of multiple contextual elements at once. Understood by some scholars as post-process and also as *ecocomposition*, such an approach is defined as “the study of the relationships between environments (and by that we mean natural, constructed, and even imagined places) and discourse (speaking, writing, and thinking)” (Weisser & Dobrin, 2001, 6). Ecocomposition is invested in understanding how context and discursive practices shape each other and thus focuses on “experience, living texts, and interactive relationships as the central features of knowing, knowledge construction, and the legitimation of knowledge” (Boyd, 2011, 288). Interactive relationships are at the basis of peer response activities and heavily entrenched with displays of knowledge (i.e. uptake from previous knowledge/experience or instructor), ideally engaged in knowledge construction (i.e. students can collaborate on writing together), and interactive behaviors cue students toward legitimation (speech acts such as rejection or acceptance, choices of whether to integrate feedback, etc.). Beyond the frames and implications for the interactions themselves, place (both literal and metaphorical) also becomes important when considering particular environments designed to meet certain student needs (all multilingual sections, for example) and further, when considering larger institutional and sociocultural factors (the transferability function of First Year Composition and the globalization of English, for example.) Within one task, in this case, peer response, myriad elements become important when considering context, and bring broader implications to surface. The tenets of ecocomposition recognize the limitations of only attempting to understand classroom writing through a monolithic lens; it is instead imperative to embrace

complex and holistic approaches that create spaces for understanding the system of writing as a series of complex, interactive, and constantly shifting individual elements. Writing is not an independent activity, but rather one influenced by a network of activities within interlocking systems. We must look beyond what is happening within the space of the classroom, or a conversation alone, to even attempt to understand it.

Furthermore, ecocomposition's "attachment to complex ecology contends that there is a need to address the complex relationships between parts in order to develop more holistic concepts of writing while understanding that we will never be able to fully understand all the complexities and fluctuations of that system." (Dobrin, 2011, p. 144). Clearly, such a theory is reflexive to its own limitations as well, but while still recognizing we can never *fully* understand writing systems within and outside of classroom environments, it is also apparent the ways in which such an attempt is fruitful, and that ongoing attempts do bring us closer to gaining deeper insight into the act of composing. It is certainly a challenge to develop research models that lead us toward a holistic understanding, but it is essential at this time, especially while theorists acknowledge much of what is holding back some types of composing research is a lack of investment in embracing the ecological conditions (Dobrin, 2011). Dobrin, among others, recognizes the dynamic insights ecological perspectives bring us, namely that when we see writing beyond the immediate context, and allow ourselves to explore the ways in which contextual variables shape and are shaped by relational interaction, we can open ourselves up to a robust understanding of such a complex activity.

Adopting an ecocompositionist framework allows researchers to directly interrogate questions related to teaching and learning on the basis of relevant contextual variables. Further,

beyond the variables, it is the “context” itself, then, that becomes as much in need of research as individual variables, as it gives rise to particular types of research appropriate for dynamic classroom contexts and student interactions. Cindy Johanek (2000) suggests adopting a fluid notion of context, one that expands beyond just place or location to encapsulate a richer understanding of the broader implications of context. Such an understanding of context accounts for the ways in which there is a dynamically relational quality to objects, individuals, and activities occurring at multiple and ongoing levels of context. For example, institutional placement and labeling, as well as multifaceted student identities and attitudes, must be considered when attempting to study a complex classroom activity like peer response. Previous research that has narrowed in on task design, student uptake, or even culture alone has overlooked the dynamism of context. A fluid notion of context along with an ecological inquiry requires a combination of research approaches that rejects the dichotomy often reinforced between qualitative and quantitative research methods. Rather than just looking at one variable in peer response (for example stance or uptake), or rather than simply describing interaction styles or counting discourse markers, a fluid notion of context allows for an investigation of how variables both within and outside of the interaction operate and manifest. By repositioning the context as an emergent and constantly evolving *agent* in the interaction, rather than a backdrop, we can gain better insight into the complexity of peer response activities. For a study of this kind, it is necessary to integrate different methods originating from varying disciplinary histories and research approaches. Embracing methods that allow analytical flexibility represents a true multi-modal contextualist approach that brings together a

better way to investigate the intersections between teaching, learning, and composing as they operate within and through sociocultural ideologies and identities.

1.6 An Integrated Contextualist Method for Studying Peer Response

Approaches to L2 classroom interaction research in recent years has actively engaged an exploration of the relationship between pedagogic function and language use (van Lier 1988; Seedhouse, 2004), particularly in response to criticisms that have seen treatment of many classrooms as something static and concrete, often failing to recognize important and dynamic contextual factors. Moreover, the use of system-based approaches, or predetermined categories of analysis developed from extensive trialing in classroom analysis (Bellack et. al, 1966; Flounders, 1970; Moskowitz, 1971; Spada and Frolich, 1995) have been identified as insufficient when aiming to study the complex nature of classroom interaction, one that is simultaneously constructive and constitutive. For example, Flounders (1970) developed a set of categories used to describe the nature of interactions between instructors and students (“teacher talk” such as praising and “pupil talk” such as responding). System-based approaches such as these paved the way for other models to emerge designed to interpret classroom interaction, such as Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975) Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF). While still attempting to develop a system of analysis, Sinclair and Coulthard employed tools of DA rooted in structural-functional linguistics, a popular approach to analyzing classroom interaction like peer response. While such models are developed through extensive research and do provide a lens by which a researcher can identify patterns potentially relevant to assessing a task, unfortunately these models also present researchers with a number of limitations as they are often fixed, and do not account for variation and context. In contrast to

these types of approaches, dynamically emerging and situated models can present researchers with a more flexible set of tools that can allow for an investigation of the nuances of interactions often missed when relying upon system-based analysis. With such a critique in mind, researchers of classroom interaction, especially in linguistically diverse and language learning contexts, have looked to other research frameworks which might allow for attunement to detail and as such, a more elevated understanding of interaction. Conversation analysis (CA) approaches (Garfinkel, 1967; Sacks *et al.*, 1974) have been extended beyond naturally occurring talk-in-interaction to having applicable use in institutionalized settings such as classrooms (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage and Greatbatch, 1991). Heritage (1997) has discussed how such a methodology lends itself to identifying the ways in which “context is created for and by the participants in relation to the goal-oriented activity by which they are engaged,” and further explains that, by “examining specific features in the institutional interaction, an understanding can be gained of the ways in which context is both constructed and sustained” (Walsh, 2006). For a complex task such as peer response, an approach that explores a dynamic understanding of the interactional context is necessary.

However, solely using a CA approach can also be deemed insufficient when attempting to take into account numerous contextual variables, especially in a study where the both the interaction and interactional context is of great importance. Various perspectives and considerations on the part of the researcher and participants must be brought into consideration. Thus, in this study, *interactional sociolinguistics* (Schiffrin, 1996) has been selected as a research approach for its multifaceted nature in approaching data and context simultaneously. Interactional sociolinguistics as a method is developed from the work of Gumperz (1982) and

joins conversational-analytic approaches with observational and ethnographic techniques. This approach lends itself to the examination of linguistic and contextual factors, while still supporting a qualitative and interpretive inquiry of dynamic classroom practices within specific tasks such as peer response.

The relationship between contextual variables and interaction is the primary emphasis of this study, and therefore, it is necessary to investigate its research questions through a variety of modes of inquiry. These research questions are outlined more thoroughly in Chapter 2, but their focus spans such categories as teacher philosophy and persona, task design and execution, environmental considerations, textual development, and reported experiences and attitudes on the part of both instructors and students. In order to explore this breadth of inquiries, the analytical models employed build upon established findings in stance, pragmatics, conversation analysis, content analysis, and uptake while taking into account consideration of elements related to material conditions and specific features of culture and identity. Interactional sociolinguistics therefore provides an appropriate method because of its integration of discourse analysis as well as ethnographic methods. The discourse analysis in this study is applied through approaches to analyzing audio-taped recorded classroom interactions and in-depth interviews with instructors and students. In addition, there is a scrutiny of documents (both instructor and student produced) in relation to patterns found in discourse with a specific focus on content and rhetorical moves, particularly in the interest of providing a more substantial picture of the interactions and interviews themselves. For example, instructor feedback is investigated for the relationship it bears upon the type of feedback students give one another in peer response. What is at stake in an inquiry of this

nature is how and to what extent instructor feedback might be positively or negatively shaping interactions. How an instructor intentionally (through directive modeling) or inadvertently (through passive modeling) sets up feedback practices is a contextual variable that may impact how students give each other feedback, particularly for multilingual students who may be “new” to such an academic practice. Further, the way instructors position themselves (both metaphorically and literally) may also impact student interactions. How instructors are presenting their feedback in relation to peers explicitly (through instruction) or implicitly (by chiming in during interactions) are variables that can influence the nature of exchange. Adopting an ecological view allows researchers to include such considerations during analysis. Then, other pertinent questions can emerge, such as: Are linguistically diverse students productively utilizing feedback models? Do such feedback models present limitations when students might lack the presumed “authority” necessary to correspond with such feedback models? In what ways do students prioritize instructor vs. peer feedback and how do they negotiate the value of each? Only by putting discourse analysis in conversation with other modes of inquiry can a researcher begin to effectively explore questions of this nature.

It is evident from the research available and the pilot study conducted that exploring peer response in multiple classroom environments is necessary and will add valuable understanding to this complex topic. Contextual and discursive inquiries are further strengthened through execution of interview protocols, greater interrogation of the relationship between instructor and peer discourse, and exploration of the chosen mode of peer response with a particular focus in linguistically diverse classroom environments. Finally, the use of an ecological approach as is utilized in this study will allow for the types of questions to emerge

which can include important contextual variables alongside broader questions related to relevant curricular, institutional, and global concerns. These, among other pertinent spatial questions, are explored throughout this study to “place” peer response interactions alongside multiple intersecting variations of context that occur both within and outside the composition classroom.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

As outlined in Chapter 1, despite a range of studies in peer response spanning over more than twenty years in a variety of college composition environments, there have been few research studies that attempt to encapsulate the numerous intersecting contextual variables at work in peer response activities, especially in response to an increase in multilingual student populations in US universities. Contextual variables of all kinds are highly relevant to classroom-based research (curricular constraints, task-design and implementation, and material conditions of the classroom environment, to name a few). Recognizing the impact of these variables coincides with an increasingly shifting view of discursive situations and writing processes (including peer response activities) as comprised of complex socially constituted networks rather than statically contained. Additionally, in multilingual composition environments, the network widens in many ways, and contextual variables related to language and culture are heightened, thus greatly influencing how students interact and perceive learning experiences. For example, different academic experiences and cultural ideologies as well as varying language proficiency might impact students’ motivations, attitudes, and interactions, but

without full contextual scrutiny and a method that allows for it, the level of influence and interconnectivity is difficult to determine.

With such an eco-contextualist goal in mind, this study takes a qualitative ecological approach that includes ethnography alongside discourse analysis. The data is presented through an ethnographic case study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Stake, 1995). By integrating multiple methods of analysis, the approach allows for a more in-depth picture of an ever-present classroom activity that continues to challenge practitioners and researchers alike. The chapter will first present a brief overview of the theory of ecocomposition as a framework, then outline the specific methods of qualitative research (ethnography and ethnographic case study), then introduce the area of discourse analysis employed. These summaries are followed by a discussion of direct application of these approaches: the presentation of the research context for my study and discussion of the processes of data collection and analysis.

2.1 Ecocomposition as a Methodological Framework

Over the last three decades, scholars in composition have come to recognize writing and writing processes as ecological phenomena, in that they represent discursive activities that are neither solitary nor static. These discursive activities are systematized, networked, and entrenched within connections and relationships with ideas, exigencies, the texts themselves, intersectional contexts within and outside the activity, and other writers—all influences that extend far beyond the individual writer. Discursive activities like peer response are contained within larger discursive systems such as composition classrooms, writing programs, and universities. Recognizing the ecological nature of

these activities and systems speaks to a fundamental shift in the way discursive situations are perceived and investigated, that participation within them is representative of continuous engagement with various systems that are socially constituted rather than individually controlled or contained. As such, as Reiff, Bawarshi, Ballif, and Weisser (in press) observe in their introduction to *Writing Program Ecologies*, “much of the current theoretical work in writing studies works from an inherently ecological perspective, envisioning writing as bound up in, influenced by, and relational to spaces, places, locations, environments, and the interconnections among the entities they contain” (np). This movement, known as *ecomposition*, signifies the intersection between the fields of ecology and composition studies.

However, while it seems evident that ecological models have been readily embraced theoretically as have viewing writing and its processes as dynamic, networked, and systematized, the application of these models into methodologies has not been as pervasive. In fact, in the last few years, this facet of *ecomposition* has been the basis of some critique amongst scholars. Dobrin (2011) has noted the ways in which *ecomposition* has fallen short as an intellectual endeavor, namely in that “so few people have taken up the ecological imperative as a direction of research” (p. 126) and more specifically, recognizing that those who have have not tended to focus their inquiry on writing and writing processes as a primary object of study. Along those lines, Reiff et al (in press) acknowledge the gap between a disciplinary acceptance of the notion of the ecology of writing and the application of such a theory to the “pragmatic work of writing programs” (np). Peer response is both an extension of the pragmatic work of writing

programs as well as a complex activity connected to numerous discursive systems that make its function as an ecology one worthy of investigation. In order to investigate it, though, it is essential to recognize the necessity of developing a set of tools appropriate for inquiry. Dobrin (2011) suggests that in order to account for the complexity of writing systems, a more complex set of ecological methodologies is required. However, because there has been a lack of studies attempting to employ such complex methodologies, few models actually exist. By acknowledging both the need to better understand discursive-material ecologies connected to writing processes and the lack of methods available to do so, Reiff et al call on scholars to develop new tools, frameworks, and methodologies that can attempt to study the complex networks of interrelatedness encompassed within writing systems.

This study attempts to build upon these theoretical understandings and respond to the need to create new tools of inquiry appropriate for the type of complex questions we are interested in asking in relation to the ecologies of writing systems. Because this study is attuned to the situatedness of peer response in composition, as such, the method I have chosen was developed to account for the complexity, vibrancy, and interdependency an ecological perspective calls for, including the “temporal, spatial, material, and ambient dimensions of writing performances” (Reiff et al). The activity of peer response is very much a writing “performance,” one interconnected to numerous other performances (teaching, discussions, revisions, conferences, etc.), and it is of great interest to unpack these performances in a manner that might help get us closer to understanding the complexity of interaction that occurs. To that end, I use qualitative research methods,

combining tools of discourse analysis (DA), case study, and ethnography as a way to encapsulate multiple modes of inquiry simultaneously.

2.2 Qualitative Methods of Research

An understanding of writing processes as fundamentally ecological, woven together by a complex network of social and material influences and interactions, would naturally lend itself to research that recognizes the socially constructed nature of reality (Davis, 1995), and further recognizes a researcher's inability to measure that reality in an objective or concrete way. Qualitative methods of research directly interrogate the "situatedness" of a given experience or interaction along with scrutinizing the multiple intersecting modes of interpretations. Such complexity of interpretation is a core component of ecological perspectives, those that seek to explore how both the social and material aspects are less stable than perhaps previously assumed. Qualitative methods help researchers get closer to such an understanding.

2.2.1 Ethnography

Ethnography as a methodological practice is rooted in the field of anthropology and has undergone a number of applicational transformations over the years. Ethnography has been taken up by many fields, and composition is no exception. Those who adopt it as an approach recognize its usefulness as being responsive to an emergent and situated problem, whilst also providing specific methods in which to investigate them. Using the practice of ethnography, a researcher first observes through participation (most commonly utilizing an "emic" or insider-based perspective), then attempts to

interpret and describe the shared and learned patterns of cultural groups who share particular beliefs, languages, experiences, goals, values, and/or interests (Creswell, 2007). What is notable about such an approach, particularly in thinking about the complex social networks at work in both writing processes and classroom interactions, is the way in which ethnography can help unveil “seemingly invisible networks” at work in a given research setting and help researchers better understand the rich and dynamic elements that contribute to communication and interaction (Sheridan, 2012). As Sheridan explains:

Through long-term research, ethnography highlights the impact of these networks; in the process, ethnography examines perspectives that are often misunderstood, underdeveloped, or occluded in popular understandings of an issues, thereby informing policies and practices that both affect the participants and inform the much-larger networks and structures in which these participants are located. (p. 73)

As explored in Chapter One, multilingual peer response is an area in need of greater understanding, and utilizing ethnography can allow for the exploration of the intersectional contextual factors in a rich and multifaceted way. College composition classroom contexts are comprised of dynamic cultural groups, and investigating these groups requires an epistemological process (Street, 2010) that recognizes the dynamic nature of culture itself. In multilingual settings in particular, where the cultural context of the classroom is also greatly impacted by numerous cultural networks within which students and instructors alike affiliate, ethnography is desirable for the way it positions culture itself as situated, heterogeneous, negotiated, conflictual, and constantly evolving rather than as a fixed or static entity. For example, in peer response, a fixed view of culture may dictate that advice from native speaker students is always preferential over advice given from non-native speaker students, whereas a dynamic view of culture would

allow for the interrogation of the situatedness beyond what apparent cultural factors dictate. In the example between Chad and Tracy introduced in Chapter One, only by unfolding the constrained and situational layers of the interaction could the nature of the interaction become more contextually revealed. Further, because ethnography embraces the way the cultural context is influenced and shaped by the interests of the researcher and attempts to examine the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Chappelle & Duff, 2003), my experiences as an instructor, scholar, and administrator of Composition and TESOL allow for a situated view of culture that is context-dependent. For example, through ethnography I am able to consider interactions contextually because I am not beholden to attempting to explain what I observe in a simplistic or non-contradictory way. Throughout the study I will explore the ways in which interviewees purport a particular identity in conversations with me that are not always reflected in other means of observation.

The practice of ethnography as a mode of research in many ways supports an ecological approach, particularly with the way in which it helps researchers understand both visible and invisible networks influencing a study's participants and examine the impact of such networks (Sheridan, 2012). Ethnography, in this way, not only recognizes the presence of networks and systems, but also creates an opportunity and a means to analyze their interrelatedness. The way ethnography allows writing scholars to examine the relationships between language practices and larger cultural issues have made ethnographically informed research practices popular since the late 1980's; however, it

has also been recognized that ethnography, particularly in relation to writing-based research, can present some limitations as well.

Although the process of ethnography varies greatly amongst researchers and contexts, it generally includes three stages: a “pre-researching” stage where the logistical elements of the study are worked out (negotiating with participants and institutional review boards, for example), a “researching” stage where extensive qualitative and quantitative data is being gathered, coded, and cross-checked for triangulation, and finally, a “writing” stage where ethnographers essentially “tell their story” (Geertz, 2000). Despite these generally agreed upon stages, the process of ethnography is often recursive and “messy” (Sheridan, 2012), and staying committed to the complexity of people and practices from an emic perspective also usually require a certain amount of flexibility. As Sheridan (2012) notes, “ethnographers do not follow a predetermined, three-stage framework but rather adapt long-standing methodological traditions to fit the current opportunities and challenges they face as they crack open the complexities of contemporary questions” (p. 77). Acknowledging the benefits one can gain (for example giving great insight into language and literacy practices in multilingual college composition settings) also involves recognizing the need for “writing studies scholars to continue to define and develop our own ethnographic research tradition” (Sheridan, 2012, p. 82). As composition studies has recognized complex systems at work, we too need to adapt tools to allow us to analyze those complex systems. Ethnography, due to its recursivity and lack of structured methodology does present some limitations from a research perspective, particularly in an ecolocological approach, where so many variables

are pertinent at once and without focus, the data can take on a certain unwieldiness when examining for salient trends. Integrating a more focused method can provide guidance when attempting to account for multiple contextual factors like an ecological approach demands. Ethnography provides researchers a start, and discourse analysis helps to add even more breadth. Researching conversational moves alongside broader contextual factors allows for a more complex picture. And although some of the “messiness” cannot be avoided, utilizing structured categories of analysis like DA, as I will discuss shortly, can help to hone in on emergent categories in a focused and meaningful way.

2.2.2 Ethnographic Case Study

As mentioned previously, the practice of ethnography as a methodological tool has undergone transformation across disciplines. While these transformations have contributed to some grievances about what either is or is not ethnography, part of its attractiveness as a method is its adaptability. In recognizing its various modes of application, particularly in educational settings, Green and Bloome (1997) created a set of categories for the types of ethnography most commonly used. The first category, “doing ethnography,” refers to a traditional, longitudinal approach very closely tied with the expectations of a particular discipline and involves the “framing, conceptualizing, interpreting, writing and reporting associated with a broad, in-depth, and long-term study of a social or cultural group” (Green & Bloom, 1997, p. 183; cited in Sheridan, 2012, p. 80). The second category, “adopting an ethnographic perspective,” acknowledges that one can undertake a less comprehensive, more focused ethnographic approach as a way

to study particular cultural practices of a social group, but such an approach should be guided by specific cultural theories within anthropology or sociology. The final category, “using ethnographic tools,” describes an approach that uses some of the methods typically associated with fieldwork that may or may not be guided by specific cultural theories. It is the final category, “using ethnographic tools,” that will be employed in this study.

By using ethnographic tools flexibly alongside other methods, I am able to investigate peer response activities as complex interactions that interconnect with everyday teaching and learning practices. By utilizing an ethnographic case study, I aim to present an in-depth and complex view of one classroom discourse community, where multiple variables contribute to the interactions and experiences of the participants. An ethnographic case study enhances an ecological perspective by narrowing in on multiple layers present in one classroom ecology. Through deep analysis of many different aspects of this classroom network, I attempt to include “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 2000) of the case study with the goal of making some conclusions about patterns and themes that might be relevant for broader pedagogical and curricular implications (Yin, 2009). However, it must be noted that this study doesn’t attempt to make broad generalizations as the study is founded upon an understanding that each classroom ecology has its own unique and dynamic orientation and network, which is why such a focused viewpoint was appealing for this study. As such, it is the “particularity and complexity of the single cases” (Stake, 1995) that is of most interest and salience. Multiple methods were employed in an effort to gain a sense of the particularity and complexity, and thus

Discourse Analysis also became a means to achieve such a nuanced view of the peer response interactions.

2.2.3 Discourse Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics

In contrast to early understandings of formal linguistics, the development of the study of discourse at the mid-20th century was greatly connected with applying analysis beyond the confines of the sentence to consider larger units and structures of discourse. With the broader recognition that contemporary societies are mediated through discourse, the study of discourse also became a means to interrogate how social interactions contribute to the process of building knowledge. Therefore, the study of discourse not only involves studying the nature of social interaction but readily brings into question the nature of meaning in such interactions. Descriptive linguistics has provided discourse analysts the tools with which to analyze language within the social contexts they are produced. Discourse analysis has been used in a variety of different ways and in a number of settings (to investigate everyday conversations, written discourse, institutional correspondences, narrative modes of communication, etc.), but what unites the field is an interest in providing a “cognitive and social perspective on language use and communication exchanges [including] spoken as well as written discourse” (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000).

The cognitive and social perspective on language use and communication exchanges have been of interest to scholars who aim to study classroom interaction, particular amongst linguistically diverse student populations. Approaches to L2

classroom interaction research in recent years has actively engaged an exploration of the relationship between pedagogic function and language use (van Lier 1988; Seedhouse, 2004), particularly in response to criticisms that have seen treatment of many classrooms as something static and concrete, often failing to recognize important and dynamic contextual factors. Moreover, the use of system-based approaches, or predetermined categories of analysis, have been identified as insufficient when aiming to study the complex nature of classroom interaction, one that is simultaneously constructive and constitutive. Conversation analysis (CA) approaches (Garfinkel, 1967; Sacks *et al.*, 1974) have been extended beyond naturally occurring talk-in-interaction to having applicable use in institutionalized settings such as classrooms (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage and Greatbatch, 1991). Heritage (1997) has discussed how such a methodology lends itself to identifying the ways in which “context is created for and by the participants in relation to the goal-oriented activity by which they are engaged,” and further explains that, by “examining specific features in the institutional interaction, an understanding can be gained of the ways in which context is both constructed and sustained” (Walsh, 2006, p. 296).

However, solely using a CA approach can be deemed insufficient when attempting to take into account numerous contextual variables, especially in a study where both the interaction and interactional context is of great importance. Various perspectives and considerations on the part of the researcher and participants must be brought into consideration. Thus, in this study, *interactional sociolinguistics* (Schiffrin, 1996) has been selected as a research approach for its multifaceted nature in approaching

data and context simultaneously. Interactional sociolinguistics as a method is developed from the work of Gumperz (1982) and joins conversational-analytic approaches with observational and ethnographic techniques. This approach lends itself to the examination of linguistic and contextual factors, while still supporting a qualitative and interpretive inquiry of dynamic classroom practices within specific tasks such as peer response.

Interactional sociolinguistics provides an appropriate method because of its integration of discourse analysis and ethnographic methods. The discourse analysis in this study will be employed through approaches to analyzing recorded interactions, primarily. However, the documents collected will also be analyzed on the basis of content and rhetorical moves, particularly in the interest of providing a more substantial picture of the interactions themselves. The ethnographic work includes observations, interviews, and surveys, where these components will provide an even greater understanding on the interactional data.

2.3 The Research Study

In an effort to more deeply understand the classroom interaction that occurs in linguistically diverse composition classrooms as well as the effects such interactions have on student writing development, the study aims to explore the following overarching question:

To what extent and how do contextual variables (task design and implementation, discursive interactions, student attitudes, instructor feedback, material conditions, etc.) shape types of peer interactions during peer response between linguistically diverse populations in composition? And what impact do these variables have on response uptake?

To address this larger question, the study will be guided by the following research questions:

- *How is the activity of peer response designed and implemented in relation to both course and task goals?*
- *What patterns are revealed through the examination of discursive interactions, specifically linguistic and metalinguistic features in peer response (turn-taking, talk-time, question-asking, uptake, off-task talk, etc.)?*
- *What is the relationship between the discourse of instructor feedback and peer response practices?*
- *What is the relationship between peer response and learner uptake in subsequent drafts?*
- *What is the relationship between overall classroom participation practices and practices in peer response interactions?*
- *What are students' reported attitudes about peer response in terms of value to their personal goals and the goals of the course?*
- *What is classified as "success" in peer response interaction, and what types of interactions support "success"?*

Addressing these research questions through a multi-method research approach to linguistically diverse composition classroom settings, I hope to provide a more complex view of peer response activities, with the goal of exploring implications that can be of value for researchers and practitioners alike.

2.3.1 The Research Site and Course Context

The study was conducted at a public research university in the Pacific Northwest Region of the U.S. The university will be identified as Vistaview University (VU) in this dissertation. VU boasts a large, diverse, and metropolitan campus. Further, its mission is dedicated to diversity, outlining in their mission statement, "As an integral part of a large and diverse community, the University seeks broad representation of and encourages

sustained participation in that community by its students, its faculty, and its staff.” (VU Official Website, 2014)

VU’s urban setting and historical tradition has contributed to its diverse community, but in recent years, active recruitment alongside a growing global interest in U.S. higher education has brought about record highs in international student enrollment. According to annual findings from the Institute of International Education and the U.S. Department of State's annual "Open Doors" report, there were more than 800,000 international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities in 2012, a record high, up 7% from the previous year. These trends have been matched and exceeded at VU, where in 2009 there were approximately 7.7% international students in their student population (Kang, 2011), then up to 18% of incoming freshman were international (New York Times, 2012). According to the Official Student Academic Data records compiled by the office of the Registrar at VU, the total international student population in 2013 was 12.6% and had increased to 14.1% in 2014. While it is significant to note the growing increase each year, specifically within the last four years, it is also significant to highlight the incoming freshman estimate as notably higher, as each freshman class being brought in represents higher numbers of international students than the number overall as recruitment and interest increase.

The freshman demographic is important to note in relation to this study, given its focus on first year composition. College composition classrooms are likely to reflect high levels of diversity, specifically linguistic diversity, because composition courses are requisites for general education requirements for all students. Students can enroll in these

courses at any time in their college career; however, the vast majority do enroll in their first year, some to gain the writing experience offered, some in recognizing it as a prerequisite for other coursework, and some, admittedly, to “get it out of the way.”

Nonetheless, 100-level composition courses at VU are primarily comprised of freshman students, and thus at the very least represent an overall population of diversity, and in many cases, a more pronounced amount.

The Expository Writing Program (EWP) at Vistaview University houses most of the 100 level (introductory composition courses) and 200-level (intermediate composition courses) and specifically, the 100-level course featured in this study. The 100-level curriculum features the shared goal of preparing students for writing in academic and non-academic contexts they will encounter both within and outside of the university. With that goal in mind, the courses are designed with a set of four learning outcomes that require teachers and students to engage with *genre* (“to demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that writers use in different writing contexts”), *research* (“to read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts and incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully in order to generate and support writing”), *argument* (“to produce complex, analytic, persuasive arguments that matter in academic contexts”), and *revision* (“To develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing”) through the development of specific and focused writing-based skills (see Appendix 1 for full version of outcomes). And while some courses in EWP include areas of emphasis such as literature or service-learning, the 131 course in the 100-level EWP offerings takes a more

general approach, whereby instructors can utilize different modes of readings and writings of their choosing in the service of the learning outcomes.

Students are required to take one 100-level composition course to satisfy the “C” credit of the university, and while more than 4,000 students enroll each year in an EWP course, most students enroll in the 131 option, labeled as “Composition: Exposition.” While the selection of readings and writing are created by instructors, there is a shared curriculum that works with the aforementioned learning outcomes and utilizes two writing sequences (including several shorter 2-3 page papers and two longer 5-7 page papers), finally culminating in a critically reflective writing portfolio that asks students to arrange and present their work as an argument towards their fulfillment of the course outcomes. The courses cap at 22 students, and are generally fully enrolled. The instructors for the courses are primarily graduate student Teaching Assistants (TAs) from English, with a small number of TAs from the Comparative Literature department. The instructors have varying levels of academic and teaching experiences, but all must participate in a 2 week orientation prior to the start of the academic year led by the EWP administration and enroll in a graduate-level Composition Pedagogy course that runs in tandem with their first term teaching assignment. In most cases, first-year instructors are assigned to teach the 131 course, as is true of the instructors featured in this study.

Each year, the orientation and Composition Pedagogy course are adapted and modified to fit the needs of the program, needs that often reflect changes in student demographics, a particular teaching cohort, and are generally responsive to feedback collected from the previous year’s participants. In 2013, when this research was

conducted, the program had undergone a few notable changes, especially influenced by the increase of linguistically diverse student populations and expressed anxieties on the part of instructors in relation to working with multilingual students. One area of concern in the year prior to this study (2012) was the amount to which instructors should be engaging in grammar instruction, and more specifically, providing grammar feedback to students. While it is evident through examination of the course outcomes that rhetorical knowledge and inquiry, and not grammar, is to be the emphasis in instruction, proofreading and revision expectations (which include grammar development) are a part of Outcome 4 (see Appendix 1), and with the growing population of multilingual students also came an increase in what is commonly identified as “grammar errors” as well as an interest from these students in gaining more control over their grammar fluency. Because most instructors in EWP do not have a background in TESOL or expertise in teaching grammar, the administration sought to develop a policy (see Appendix 2) that would maintain the expectations of the curriculum, serve the interest of the students, and help guide instructors with a clearer set of guidelines in relation to providing grammar instruction in the classroom and more specifically, in feedback. Thus, in 2012, the EWP developed a feedback policy that provided instructors three pathways designed to be adaptive to instructional style and experience as well as student population and need. In essence, each instructor can select an approach to feedback that either introduces students very early to grammar instruction or withhold such instruction in the interest of addressing content-based issues first. The policy as it relates to the case study will be discussed in greater depth in subsequent chapters, but it is important to note here that this

policy was introduced for the first time in the 2013 orientation, along with other conscientious efforts towards addressing the needs of multilingual students, for example, the selection of text, how to engage participation, and promote interaction in group work (like peer response), amongst other relevant categories.

Additionally, the EWP had been working to develop many resources for multilingual students prior to 2012/13 including the option for students to enroll in all MLL sections of English 131, take an MLL studio “workshop” for general credit that would enhance the skills in introductory writing courses, as well as other tutoring options. As a member of the EWP administration and a TESOL expert, I have worked in the development of many of these resources. Further, as one of the leaders of the orientation, I can attest that promoting discussions about the challenges and opportunities teaching MLLs can present were at the forefront of much of the orientation content. The orientation’s goal, primarily, is to provide instructors with the practical tools necessary to develop a course suited to their interests and experiences that align with the curricular expectations of the EWP and fit student needs from quarter to quarter. After the completion of the orientation, instructors should have designed their first assignment sequence covering the first half of the term. The Composition Pedagogy course, which begins at the start of the quarter, provides instructors ongoing support, introduces composition theory, engages them reflectively with their teaching practices and experiences, and helps them develop the remainder of their course assignments. The course culminates in a teaching portfolio, designed for instructors to reflect upon their experiences as well as establish a guiding philosophy for their practice. The EWP sees

itself as a teacher development program, and promotes instructor autonomy within the expectations of the curriculum. The participant in this study, as a first year instructor, took part in both the orientation and pedagogy course, something that will be explored in relation to the case study instructor further in the corresponding chapters. The participant will be briefly introduced below, while her relationship to their training and pedagogical choices will be analyzed further in Chapters 3 and 4 alongside the analysis of the course featured in this study.

2.4 The Participant

For the initial study, I recruited four TAs in the Expository Writing Program (EWP) at Vistaview University (VU), all of whom were teaching English 131 in Spring 2013. All TAs were responsible for teaching one Composition course (the standard course load for a TA) each term, and each instructor was teaching English 131 in the Spring Quarter of their first year as instructors. Typically, ethnographic case studies utilize four participants (e.g., McKay & Wong, 1996), and thus seemed to be an ideal number in this study. The participants were selected using the approach of “purposeful sampling” (Patton, 2001), and therefore had variance in experiences (educational and professional) and demographics (gender, age, etc.). Upon IRB approval, I contacted the four selected TAs prior to the Spring Quarter of 2013 via email (see Appendix 3). Of the four I reached out to, all agreed to participate in the study. While I collected extensive

data for all four participants, I will focus on one case study in this dissertation's presented data.²

The highlighted participant in this study represents a common profile of the TAs that work in Vistaview University's Expository Writing Program. Lee was a 1st year TA at the time this study took place. While Lee had been a student at VU for one year prior to working as a TA, she came to her first year of teaching in EWP under the same set of circumstances as other TAs in regards to training, orientation, and experience with the program. Lee taught an English 131 course in the Spring of 2013 with a set shared goals and outcomes, and her course was enrolled by a linguistically diverse set of students, including a high number of multilingual students (International and from other language backgrounds). Lee's course was taught in a classroom setting common to most instructors who teach in EWP (where students do not have access to their own computer and

² One aspect of great importance to this study is the interrogation of context across peer response activities, particularly considering the contexts relevant to multilingual writers. Within the EWP at VU, there exist newly developed composition courses electively enrolled by multilingual students and taught by instructors with professional experience in TESOL. Comparing both all multilingual settings alongside mixed NS/multilingual settings was an initial goal of this study; however, due to research constraints and limitations, the two all multilingual courses have been omitted from this data set. Both omitted data sets presented analytic challenges because of the significance of the data that took place in Chinese language. As this researcher is not fluent in Chinese, it would have been necessary to utilize the services of a translator prior to the analysis of data, which was out of scope for the parameters of this dissertation study. As the project progressed, it was additionally decided to omit the 3rd data set, which represented a computer-integrated context. Focusing on one classroom data set allowed for the thorough application of the methodology, which was newly developed for this project. Given the contextualist nature of the study, in which multiple contextual factors are being analyzed at once, focusing on one case was the best means to maintain the integrity of the study from the perspective of both depth and breadth. It is the intention of the researcher to utilize the omitted data in future development of this work. The included participant was deemed appropriate to provide an ample representation of a multilingual composition context.

instructor's access to technology varies). In the case of Lee's classroom space, she had a data projector where she could connect her own laptop if she so wished. With respect to the administration of peer response activities, Lee utilized a paper-based approach more historically common to both the teaching composition overall and within the VU writing program as well. In the subsequent chapters, the reasons for the selection of this approach, along with its implications, will be explored in-depth. Table 1 outlines the initial profile of Lee from the standpoint of demographic features and professional and academic experiences and goals. Such features will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters.

Table 2.1
Participant Profile

Name	Lee
Gender	Female
Hometown/Regional Background	Self-described "Military Brat," born in South Carolina, lived in Japan and Italy, northern California, lived on West Coast primarily, Pacific NW for 10 Years.
Language Background	English Native Speaker, intermediate Italian as a second language
Age	27
Academic Program at UW	English (Literature and Culture) PhD track
Year in the Program	1 st Year PhD, 1 st Year TA
Previous educational experience	Undergraduate degree in English and Women's studies from a small Liberal Arts in the Pacific NW. Completed MA in 2012 in English at VU with a focus in 20 th Century Literature and critical theory.
Previous teaching experience	2 previous quarters of composition at VU, nothing formal prior to that. Worked as a high school literature tutor and a teaching assistant for a rehab and detention center for adolescent girls.

Future Educational/Professional Goal	Complete PhD, work as a university professor of English.
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2.4.1 The Researcher and The Researched

Because of this study's methodological approach, one invested in an ecological and ethnographic exploration of the context and situatedness of peer response activities within multilingual composition environments, my own standing as it relates to the nature of this study and its chosen participants is highly relevant.

What initially contributed to my interest in this study was my own experiences in peer response as a composition TA at VU. Further, as a PhD student in the Language and Rhetoric track, I became invested in better understanding and contributing to the research in this area. I recognize the relationship between research and practice, and this recognition is informed by my experiences as a writing program administrator (I was an Assistant Director in the EWP at VU during the research and dissertation writing process). My roles and experiences as an instructor, scholar, and administrator connect me in numerous and intersectional ways to this study.

Because of my involvement in the English department and EWP at VU, as well as more broadly in the field of Composition, I had access to the type of colleagues of interest for this study. I was able to both gauge interest because of my access as well as select courses that might best contribute to the linguistic diversity aspect of this study as well. Knowing the curriculum and teaching assignments also allowed for the recruitment

of various classroom contexts necessary for the study. While the access my roles and experiences allowed were in many ways beneficial to the study, it is important to acknowledge the ways in which they also might contribute to certain limitations and biases, given my close contextual familiarity. My interpretations of the data and the participants are undoubtedly influenced by my experiences; however, I did engage in practices aimed to reduce the presence of them. I selected participants primarily based upon their teaching context and student demographics, not on my relationship to the instructors. None of the participants were close friends, although I did hold a professional and somewhat social relationship with all of them prior to the study. The nature of the study as one with weekly one-on-one interactions absolutely contributed to a growing comfort and bond between me and the participants, a relationship I tried to remain aware of and critical toward, but also to see as valuable in eliciting the type of interactions necessary for such an in-depth ethnographic approach.

I met Lee as a fellow colleague in the English department in her first year as an M.A. and my 3rd year as a PhD, but did not really come to know her until she was a participant in the EWP orientation in the Fall of 2012 (she didn't work as a TA in her first year at VU). I was one of the Assistant Directors (ADs) and administrators of the orientation. She was not a part of my smaller workshop group, but I came to know her in the larger group sessions as a very engaged and enthusiastic first-year TA. She had minimal experience as a teacher and no experience with composition, but made herself very active in the new TA cohort and made frequent use of the outside support offered (visiting AD office hours frequently, for example). During Lee's second quarter teaching,

she had a high number of multilingual students enroll in her course, and she expressed a certain amount of anxiety due to her lack of experience working with this population. Because of my background in TESOL and an expertise in working with multilingual writers, Lee reached out to me a number of times during her Winter Quarter with questions related to how to employ classroom practices that would be more inclusive toward multilingual students. It was during this time that I asked Lee if she would have interest in my study, as I thought she could benefit from the type of reflection the study could offer her, and she represented a common demographic for our TAs, one with minimal experience working with multilingual students. She was very interested right away in participating, and once she was able to confirm her Spring 2013 course enrollment was linguistically diverse, she confirmed her willingness to participate in the study. In addition to having interest in developing and improving her own teaching practices, Lee also expressed interest in writing program administration, with intentions to apply as an AD herself. We certainly had a mentor/mentee relationship in this regard, something that will be explored in depth in Chapter 3.

Despite my administrative role in EWP, Lee and I spoke in-depth prior to the study about how my interest in her course stemmed from that of a scholar and fellow instructor. While other conversations we had about teaching in the past would have likely involved my advisement, the conversations we would have during the study would not. They would be entirely generative and of course, non-evaluative. I of course recognize the ways in which my administrative position might have influenced our interactions; however, I did my best to bring forth comfort and assurance, and beyond that, engaged in

various modes of data collection that would allow for triangulation and a thorough analytical lens.

2.5 Data Collection

In an effort to research peer response as it occurs contextually within each given classroom environment, I employed multiple sources of data collection including classroom observations, interviews with instructors and students, audio-recordings of peer response interactions, collection of written materials, and a survey study. Such an approach was designed to shed light on the ecology of peer response activities as they occur within diverse and highly situated college composition contexts. Because these peer response interactions occurred within the context of one completed composition course, the collection of data occurred within the 10-week duration of the course. With such a narrow field of interest (peer response), the limited time-span did lend itself to a model of focused ethnographic case study (Parthasarathy, 2008).

2.5.1 Classroom Observations

During the Spring Quarter of 2013, I visited Lee's classroom once a week. On my first visit (after obtaining IRB approved permission from the instructor), I introduced myself to the students and explained my study. I presented them with consent forms, explaining each aspect of the study, and their rights as participants. On days I came to observe, I would not be participating in classroom activities, nor would I influence or dictate the types of activities that occurred. My role as a participant observer was that of

“peripheral membership” (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 380), meaning that although I was not engaged in activities, I did establish group membership through my presence and practices of observation.

The goals of observation were to document the classroom environment by recording field notes relevant to the various contextual factors that comprise the environment. In addition to teaching practices, I aimed to observe the nature of interactions between instructors and students as well as between students in peer activities. Modes and levels of participating (both in what way and how much students were participating) were also of interest as they pertained to classroom interaction. I also took note of material conditions as they related to the environment (placement of instructor, organization of desks during larger group and smaller group work, availability and use of technology, etc.). During my observations, I either wrote or typed field notes, taking into account numerous observational elements. The observation times were set by the instructors, and often selected by them for scheduling convenience or on the basis of thinking a particular activity might be interesting or useful for the study. Each instructor did confirm at the end of the study that based on my frequency and variety of observations, I had observed an adequate and representative view of their course as a whole. After each observation, the instructor and I would have a brief follow-up interview where I asked them to give feedback on the class I had observed. In most cases, we were able to meet just after the class, where I would audio-record our conversation, but if one or both of us was unable to meet, the instructor would respond to the questions via email, and return the email to me within 1-2 days.

2.5.2 Interviews with Instructors and Students

Interviewing instructors and students for this study was an essential part of gaining a better understanding of participants' backgrounds and perspectives, especially as a way to access a context for observed behaviors (Seidman, 1998). "Meaning making" is an important part of the research process, and interviews provide a mechanism for participants to make meaning of their own experiences and, in turn, help researchers make meaning as well (Connelly & Cladinin, 1990). The instructor participants were interviewed at the beginning and at the end of the quarter as well as weekly during class observation follow-ups, while the student participants were interviewed once per quarter (generally toward the middle or end, depending on their availability). The interview questions were designed using Seidman's three-interview series model which emphasizes "focused life history," "details of experience," and "reflection of meaning" (1998:11). I did have a set of prepared interview questions for all interviews (see Appendix 7); however, they were primarily open-ended questions and follow-up questions did emerge throughout the conversations. Maintaining the nature of an actual "conversation" was important, even in recognizing that there is never "equality" between interviewers and participants during such a process (Seidman, 1998). Interviews, by nature, are a process of *co-construction*, whereby the knowledge produced is very much a product of the relationship between the interview and the interviewee as well as heavily influenced by numerous contextual variables of the conversation itself. Additionally, it is important to recognize the ways in which there is an inherent authority at work when it is indeed the interviewer who has the power to determine which questions to ask, which answers to

probe further, and which aspects of the conversation to highlight in analysis. That said, the interviewee also has a level of agency that contributes to the dynamic nature of interviews that cannot be ignored. As a researcher, I did my best to take this understanding into account and throughout this study, do not intend for the data to be presented as decontextualized in any way. Below I describe the process and nature of the interviews that took place.

For all interviews, the interviews were audio-recorded. The time and location for each interview was pre-arranged to meet the participants' personal schedules. The recorded interviews were transcribed for analysis.

- *Initial interview*

At the beginning of the Spring Quarter 2013, I had an initial interview with each participating teaching assistant. In this interview, I asked the teaching assistant about their background, teaching experiences, philosophy of teaching composition, and particular experiences with peer response groups (see [Appendix 7](#)). Each interview took about an hour.

- *After-class interview*

After each class observation (10 total for each teaching assistant), I had a 10-15 minute interview with the teaching assistant. In this interview, I asked them about their perception of the class, and clarified moments based on the class observation (see [Appendix 7](#)).

- *Interview with students after classroom interactions*

Students who agreed to be audio-recorded in class were asked if they were willing to be interviewed briefly about their perceptions of the interactions, and overall perceptions of the class. The time and place of the interview lasted about 30 minutes and the time and place was set according to the student's preferences (see [Appendix 8](#)).

- *End of quarter interviews*

After the quarter was over, I had an in-depth interview with each teaching assistant. The purpose of this interview was to capture the teaching assistant's perception of their teaching in this specific class (see [Appendix 7](#)).

2.5.3 Audio Recordings of Peer Response Interactions

The purpose of recording the peer review interactions between students in class is to look into detail about how students construct their identities together and to more deeply assess how/if students are working in alignment with both task and course goals. Only the students who agreed to be observed during class interactions were observed, and these students' interactions were audio-recorded. I selected audio-recordings for their ease in access and usage, but also because I felt that audio would optimize participation over video, while recognizing that omitting the element of interactional discourse from the visual perspective does present some limitations in the data. I attempted to offset those limitations with supplemental observational field notes. I used four audio recorders in order to record several interactions within the class on two occasions over the course of the quarter. I placed the recorder amongst the group (s) and only circulated to stop the recorders once the interactions were complete. Otherwise, I did not interact with students at all during peer response. The dates for recording were based on when the TA planned to use peer response activities naturally within the quarter. I only recorded peer groups who had consented, so depending on the way the TA chose to organize the groups, not all four recorders could be utilized. The recorded conferences were transcribed for analysis. All language utilized (whether in audio recording or online) occurred in English.

2.5.4 Collection of Written Materials

To help triangulate the data, relevant written materials were collected from each course, including: the teaching assistants' course syllabus and calendar, class handouts on

days of observations, and all writing assignment directions and prompts. Students who gave their consent for this aspect of the study also gave permission to access of their written work with the teaching assistants' feedback. Lee maintained a course websites and utilized the mode of online feedback, thus all written materials were able to be accessed online.

2.5.5 Survey

In order to get a bigger picture view about general attitudes students hold toward peer response activities, an end-of-quarter questionnaire was given to the students in Lee's class (see Appendix 9), asking about their perceptions of peer response activities and the course overall. I was able to give the questionnaires on the same day the department evaluations were given, and thus received a high level of response (approximately 95%). While these surveys do not provide a close an in-depth view, they do present an opportunity to understand larger attudinal patterns other aspects of the study do not reveal.

2.6 Data Analysis

Because this study was qualitative, the data analysis was largely an inductive process, one that aimed to develop concepts and build abstractions (Merriam, 1998). Once the data collection process was over (in the Spring of 2013), I began to organize and analyze the data. Observational fieldnotes, peer response audio recordings, interviews, surveys, evaluations, and other class materials were transcribed and coded.

Open coding was utilized as a means to look for general topics patterns in the data, especially in relation to research questions. I also shared my analysis with my participants through the process of “member check” (Creswell, 2007) as a way to help increase the validity of my interpretations.

The process of data analysis was difficult at times, particularly in attempting to embody a fully realized ecological perspective. Combining the discourse analysis with ethnography presented some challenges, many of them related to limitations of the data collection used. For example, audio recordings do not allow for full understanding of aspects such as body language, facial expressions, etc., but using video recording brought about concern for levels of participation and audio recording allowed for the possibility to record multiple interactions at once. The inclusion of many other types of data were selected to add breadth to the picture of the interactions, but of course, there are limitations with those, as well. Interviews as a method of research have been criticized at times for being a “performance” of a participant’s identity, and in classroom interaction research, observation of classroom discourse is generally found to be a more authentic representation (Hyland, 2012). It is for this reason this study unites both classroom interaction discourse with interviews, and also takes interest in how and why teachers and students might perform particular identities in various different types of contexts (when interacting with an interview, when interacting with peers, when interacting with a student or instructor, etc.). The selection of multiple modes of data collection and, thus, the opportunity for multiple modes of analysis actually allow for the complexity (and at times, messiness) to emerge.

CHAPTER 3: COURSE AND PEDAGOGICAL CONTEXT

In this chapter, I will present and analyze the course and pedagogical context of Lee's Spring Quarter English 131 (Introductory Composition: Exposition) course. Using relevant course materials and interviews with the instructor, I will share pertinent background information related to Lee's experiential background and teaching philosophy, course design, and material conditions of the classroom space, and will present student demographics as they inform the types of interactions that took place between students during the peer response (which will here on be referred to as "peer review" to represent how Lee, her students, and the EWP describe such activities, in contrast to "peer response" which has gained favor in usage amongst researchers since the early 2000s) sessions. An ecology of any classroom environment, in my view, first begins with the visualization of the course on the part of the instructor, as her or his experience and vision for the course sets to shape the course even before the students begin to engage with the course, the instructor, and one another. In this way, the instructor sets up a sort of "imprint," and in this chapter, it is my goal to share the way that Lee imprinted her own views and expectations upon this particular classroom ecology as a means to address the question of how the activity of peer response was designed and implemented in relation to both course and task goals.

3.1 Instructor Background

As introduced in Chapter 2, prior to becoming a teaching assistant Lee had no formal teaching experience, but she had taught in some informal settings, including working as a debate coach for a critical theory course as well as a teaching assistant at a rehabilitation and detention center for adolescent girls for a year. Her career goals are to eventually go on to be a university professor, specializing in topics related to 20th Century English Literature and Critical Theory. Her training for teaching First Year Composition came through the formalized training required through the university, which unites a 2 week orientation training, a 10 week long pedagogy and theory course in Composition Studies, and ongoing support and training offered through the Expository Writing Program (more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2).

After Lee agreed to participate in the study, we met at the start of Spring Quarter of 2013 to discuss her general background as well as topics related to her teacher training, teaching philosophy, teaching approaches, and goals for her upcoming class as a way to help frame how her relationship to particular practices and expectations.

When I asked her about her experience with the EWP training and support and whether or not it was helpful, she said:

Yeah. I mean, incredibly helpful. On the one hand, ... the orientation and 567 allowed us to see actual teaching artifacts, seeing what has been done in the classroom before, seeing what's worked, maybe what hasn't worked, and then more than anything, conversations I've had with people both in professional capacities, as advisors, as administrators of the program, but also with friends and fellow people that are teaching for the first time and, you know, panicking about how to teach a claim: "What did *you* do last week?" and really bouncing ideas off of each other, using the resources that already exist but then also creating our own resources.

Lee felt very supported and gained a lot from the access to support and resources. In addition to the required orientation and training, she also attended optional workshops held by the EWP Assistant Directors (ADs) on various topics such as lesson planning, sequence development, and establishing an appropriate persona in the classroom. She also opted to seek out mentoring in optional office hours, and as she mentions above, frequently engaged in informal conversations with peers where they shared experiences and gave feedback on their teaching materials. Collaboration of all kinds, especially peer interaction and mentoring, for Lee, was an essential component to her development as a teacher.

We also talked specifically about how the training she received prepared her for working with diverse student populations and discussed any anxieties she had about these populations.

Between both orientation and the readings in 567, we did a number of MLL readings for 567 that were really, really useful. But one of the things that stood out most for me was the idea of reading through error when giving feedback, so yea, when I first started teaching I was concerned about, like, how do I deal with these grammar errors and how do I deal with the sentence level issues but once I sort of got more comfortable with reading for content and sort of reading for bigger arguments, like if the grammar wasn't interfering with my understanding of the argument, sort of making more general notes and not getting overwhelmed with that. And then also making sure the student doesn't get overwhelmed by that. That helped me a lot, as did, and this was sort of, this was not geared toward MLL teaching in particular, but also the concept of the fact that, when you are teaching grammar level stuff and language level stuff, the fact that research has shown that fixing those errors and doing them repeatedly actually impedes learning, as opposed to saying hey, you tend to misuse commas, go through and find them, and that enhances learning, I used a lot of that as well, where I would highlight like one example of a misused comma, and say, this is an error that appears a lot, be on the lookout for it.

Overall, especially as a new teacher, Lee reported gaining much from the training experiences she received in EWP, particularly in the way she both developed approaches and solidified a teaching philosophy conducive to her values as an instructor and aligned with the expectations of the curriculum.

3.1.1 Teaching Philosophy

Discussing Lee's approach to teaching and underlying philosophies was an important aspect of our orientation conversation as it provided a better sense of how she intended to teach the course in this study. When I asked her what she classified as "good teaching" and to elaborate upon her teaching philosophy, she explained:

I think there's a lot of different components that go into good teaching obviously, especially when you're dealing with, um, student populations that each one of those students, a good teaching experience is different for them as well. My number one priority is usually student engagement. I think that students who actually are invested in their learning experience get more out of the process and are more, put more into the class and get more out of it. So I'm really focused on getting students involved in the coursework through a variety of interactive modes, getting them talking about subjects that they feel comfortable talking about, that they want to talk about, and then translating that into concrete writing skills.

Student engagement is a core component of Lee's teaching philosophy and she not only sees it as a key of access (for example, how through amplified engagement students can access transferable skills), but also recognizes that certain tools are necessary to promote it: interest, investment, and interactive and varied approaches. For Lee, part of the engagement stems from the cultivation of a collaborative learning environment, one that promotes student-centeredness as well as mutual respect. One practice she utilizes is posing open-ended questions to students during class discussions.

Because Lee sees complex thinking as the foundation for complex writing (which is an expectation of the EWP curriculum), Lee utilizes question-asking as a practice to “demand a higher level of engagement from students” and observes that in order to do so, those questions must expand beyond those that can be answered with a simple yes or no. Such an approach is not only influenced by curricular expectations and philosophy, but also has been influenced by trends in her own classroom demographics, which she described as “an inordinate number of math and science majors in my classes.” Because she feels that “these students are often so focused on finding the “right” answer that they aren’t used to being required to think of “why” or of other perspectives,” open-ended questions serve as mechanism to promote “active learning,” and unlike lecture classes (which Lee made clear her classes are not), Lee wants her students “actively involved, paying attention, and helping to shape the classroom discussions.”

Another practices she uses to enhance this type of active and engaged learning, as will be discussed more in depth later, involves various types of group work, including peer review. Part of cultivating a student-centered classroom, in Lee’s view, is about creating opportunities for participation and encouraging students to actually speak and engage. She explained, “I want them to be guiding class discussions as well and not just me lecturing, and in order for them to do that they have to be vocal, they have to speak up. And so, creating that space for them, and letting them see that it’s a safe space as well I think is really important to sort of fostering those kinds of communications.” In Lee’s view, fostering the types of communication that promote student-centeredness

really hinges upon mutual respect, something she takes very seriously as an element of her classroom environment.

I think that for me the catch phrase is just mutual respect. Um, I do set very firm ground rules, and we have really strict guidelines that they know that if they don't follow then they are gonna be at risk of not achieving a very good grade in the class in terms of participation and late work, and so far I haven't had any problems in terms of students being able to follow rules, um, attendance records are pretty good, people turn in their work on time, um, and they seem to have respect for those rules. I think it's really important that I maintain some sense of authority in the classroom, while also balancing that with making sure that they know that I also respect them as individuals and as students and as professionals that are working in a variety of different disciplines.

Lee sees it as her responsibility to promote a space for learning that has established rules and boundaries, but also empowers students to have a voice and some impact on the dynamics of the class. In positioning herself in the role of mediator and an authoritative one at that, there is perhaps a tension between her interest in student centeredness versus her recognition of her power (as the grade setter, for example) that ultimately, as will be observed later, does impact the dynamics of the classroom, peer review interactions, and even in students' reported behavior. Lee is conscientious of her role in the class, though, and does take it upon herself to affirm students and their areas of knowledge and expertise, something she is able to cultivate through her course content selection: pop culture.

Beyond promoting respectful interactive practices (for example, "when one person is talking nobody else is talking"), the pop culture topic itself, according to Lee, allows an opportunity for her to demonstrate her respect for students and their life experiences, because she believes it allows students to "teach" her in their writing. Such a notion truly embodies various aspects of Lee's teaching philosophy, because it makes a

gesture toward student-engagement (which Lee sees as very related to an interest in the content or topic being worked with), while also highlighting mutual respect by the way collaboration and interaction is designed to occur, and finally recognizing student-centeredness through the ability for students to be directors of their own learning and knowledge experts in their own rights. Lee's selection of her course theme very much reflects her philosophy, as she sees the way it provides entry points into her pedagogical goals.

For me it's about thinking about what I value most in a classroom, and the first is student engagement. I want to find different ways to get students involved in what they're doing and invested in what they're doing. Whether that be just in terms of investment in passing the course or allowing them to work with topics that actually interest them on a personal level. I also believe in bridging that divide between the social and academic student life. So again, part of that is about the confidence issue; they feel like experts about a lot of the things they do socially, like watching movies, like watching TV, like listening to music, talking about their favorite artists, so I want them to use the confidence that they have there to translate that into writing and into classroom conversations and discussions as well, so confidence is really important to me.

The ability for students to “bridge” their social and academic lives, for Lee, is very much a motivator in her selection of her course content, as she believes it is essential in enhancing the type of student engagement so central to her goals as an instructor.

3.2 Course Focus and Theme

As explained in greater depth in Chapter 2, while each EWP composition section differs in readings and specific writing assignments, courses are standardized by a curriculum that includes department outcomes (see Appendix 10), a series of shorter (2-3 pages) and longer writing (5-7 pages) assignments that culminate in a final revised

portfolio accompanied by critical reflections on how the selected revised texts fulfill the expectations of the outcomes.

Lee's class, entitled "The Rhetoric of Pop Culture" (See Appendix 10 for full syllabus) uses pop culture as a course theme and utilizes instructor and student selected texts of popular culture to give students "the tools necessary for a successful academic life (which requires you to produce writing that varies greatly in tone, style, research methods, complexity, and organization)" (Lee, Syllabus). Lee paraphrases the goals of the course through the expectations of the EWP outcomes by explaining that by the end of the course, student will have gained:

- The ability to thoughtfully analyze texts, materials, and the arguments of others
- The techniques of successful research and how to incorporate that research in your arguments
- An understanding of how to articulate your own complex claims
- The ability to revise successfully

Lee describes her use of popular culture as a vehicle and explains that "Non-traditional literary **texts** such as television shows and movies can serve as accessible mediums for discussion and **critical analysis**, as well as the ability to create **complex, stake-driven claims** of your own" (Lee, Syllabus).

Additionally, Lee highlights the transferability of the skills that will be attained, not just in students' academic lives, but in their lives outside of academic contexts as well. In this way, the integration of the social and academic comes full circle with both student incomes and outcomes, as embodied in this last section of the syllabus:

It is important that you be prepared to examine texts, engage in respectful and informed conversations, and, of course, write, write, and then write some more. If you are willing to put in the effort, you will leave this class with the tools to be a

successful academic writer and critically engaged member of society.

In further conversations with Lee about her selection of her course theme, asking to explain why she found it so valuable in reaching her students and achieving her own instructional goals, she explains a connection between student engagement (through topical interest) as a pathway to both mutual respect and optimal participation in the various types of activities students engage in, from larger classroom discussions to smaller groupwork (including peer review). While she recognizes that the subject matter alone isn't enough, she feels that it does provide a platform to support her instructional goals overall.

3.2.1 Assignment Sequence

While the assignment sequences are somewhat dictated by the EWP curriculum (in that there are two assignment sequences comprised of shorter and longer written assignments culminating in a final critically reflective portfolio), instructors are free (and encouraged) to develop their own unique assignments in terms of the texts used and genres engaged. A core idea for all instructors is related to “scaffolding,” or the notion that the shorter assignments should be giving students practice in skill building of the tasks that they will be asked to demonstrate in the longer assignments. During their training, instructors are asked explicitly to think about how their assignments scaffold each other, using the course outcomes as a guidepost for the skills utilized. For Lee, she described her sequence in this way:

The assignment prompts are pretty structured, uh, and as the course progresses they open up a lot so that their final sequence is a research project with the shorter assignments building into that final research paper and that's, “Choose a pop

culture text and analyze it critically.”--basically is the summary of it, and they can choose whatever they want be it fashion or TV shows or music, movies...I had a student do smart phones last quarter that ended up being a really great project, um... yeah, so giving them license to talk about something that they want to talk about and sort of look at it in a new and unexpected perspective.

As she describes it, Lee sees both of her sequences as scaffolding one another, with the ultimate goal allowing for students to have full autonomy in a research project on the pop culture topic of their choosing. Lee’s first sequence emphasizes use of scholarly sources and analysis, while her second sequence highlights the development of research skills in the service of independently selected projects. Below is an overview of her assignment sequences (see Appendix for full Assignment prompts):

Short Assignment 1: Review of a Scholarly Article

Short Assignment 2: Letter Debate between Two Scholars

Major Paper 1: A Critical Conversation about Pop Culture and the World

Short Assignment 3: Keyword Analysis

Short Assignment 4: Annotated Bibliography

Major Paper 2: Pop Culture Analysis

Lee’s choice to have two rather than three short assignments reflects her commitment to using multiple drafts for major papers as a way to engage feedback incrementally by focusing on higher order concerns in earlier drafts and lower order concerns in later drafts. Lee’s approach to feedback will be discussed more in depth later in the chapter, but here it is important to note that she received advisement on this approach from the director of EWP (as a way to promote more revision skills) and also maintained it consciously within her Spring Quarter course given the increased enrollment in linguistically diverse student populations.

3.2.2 Class Demographics

Sections of English 131 are self-selected by students, and thus generally random and unpredictable in terms of classroom demographics. As discussed in Chapter 2, Vistaview University has experienced a growing population of international and multilingual students in recent years, and introductory composition courses tend to see a relatively high enrollment of diverse student populations. Lee indicated that this quarter showed her highest enrollment of MLLs with 10 Non-Native Speakers and 6 Bilingual students (with English as one of their first languages), something she felt reflective of university demographics in some ways, but also explained that 3 of her NNSs had come to her class by way of former student recommendations. Further, she speculated that her Pop Culture theme might have been of particular interest to students from various backgrounds. While it is not required for instructors to post their unique course descriptions beforehand for students to choose from, Lee opted to do that, and it is therefore presumable that her topic might have encouraged some students to enroll (something that was confirmed later in student interviews). However, most sections are somewhat randomly enrolled, and often preferential on the basis of student schedule. Lee's Spring Quarter class demographics are outlined in the Table 3.1, the data from which was compiled based on Lee's knowledge of students' background and performance assessment she had made toward the end of the quarter. I selected the pseudonyms based very closely on the students' actual names as a way to maintain as accurate representation of these students in the study as possible. It should be noted that it is a common practice amongst International students (and students with typically "non-

American” sounding names) at VU and many institutions nationwide for students to select an “American” name for themselves to go by in their classroom contexts. It is understood that this is done as a practice to facilitate pronunciation and arguably to promote communication and interaction between instructors and peers. This was a practice amongst some students in Lee’s class. In the chart below, for non-American students who had selected “American” names for themselves, I also selected “American” names as their pseudonyms. The highlighted names in the chart represent those students whose interactions and experiences will be profiled more deeply later in the study. The function of Table 3.1 is to merely give an overview of Lee’s class makeup, particularly from the standpoint of linguistic diversity, gender divide, and relationship between perceived proficiency levels and classroom engagement, something that will be discussed in greater depth throughout the study.

Table 3.1
Students’ Backgrounds from Compiled Instructor Data

Name	Gender	Age	L1	High School Background	Classroom Engagement	Writing Proficiency	Speaking Proficiency
Travis	Male	21	English	U.S.	Very High	Very High	Very High
Leslie	Female	19	English	U.S.	Intermediate	Very High	Very High
Terrance	Male	19	English	U.S.	High	High	Very High
Jared	Male	20	English	U.S.	Very High	Very High	High

Jake	Male	19	English	U.S.	High	Very High	Very High
Amy	Female	19	Cantonese (English Bilingual)	Hong Kong International High School	Low	High	High
Marta	Female	19	English (Spanish Bilingual)	U.S.	Low	Very High	Very High
Matthew	Male	19	English (Japanese Bilingual)	U.S.	Intermediate	High	Very High
Gavin	Male	19	English (Filipino Bilingual)	U.S.	High	Very High	Very High
Miriam	Female	19	Urdu (English Bilingual)	U.S.	Intermediate	High	Intermediate
Lina	Female	19	Cantonese	China	Intermediate	Intermediate	High
Brian	Male	19	English (Filipino)	U.S.	Low	High	High

			Bilingual)				
Levi	Male	19	English (Japanese Bilingual)	U.S.	Low	High	Very High
Jessica	Female	19	Japanese	Japan	High	High	Very High
Kai	Male	19	Thai	Thailand	Low	Intermediate	Intermediate
Yungyi	Male	19	Thai	Thailand	High	Intermediate	Low
Xin	Male	19	Chinese	China	Very Low	Low	Intermediate
Kang	Male	19	English (Chinese Bilingual)	U.S.	Very Low	High	Very High
Mana	Female	19	Cantonese (English Bilingual)	Hong Kong International High School	Low	High	High
Esther	Female	18	Cantonese	China	Low	Intermediate	Intermediate
Soon	Female	19	Korean (English Bilingual)	U.S.	Low	High	High

As the table indicates, students' ages ranged from 18-21, with most students aged 19. Of the 21 students, 9 were female and 12 were male. The 8 International students

came from Thailand, Hong Kong, China, Pakistan, and Japan, while other students' language backgrounds included Spanish and Filipino. 13 students in the class had attended U.S. high schools, and many in the Pacific Northwest. Of the International students, 2 students had attended English-medium schools while the remaining 6 attended schools in their home languages but had received long-term instruction in English.

The data about engagement and proficiency levels came from rankings I compiled through my discussions with Lee. For her, “engagement” is a holistic category that includes participation levels in various classroom activities, but also includes what she classifies as other types of participation, such as “active listening” and “question asking.” Regarding proficiency, I asked Lee to rank students based on her conversations with them, perceptions of interactions with them, and experience reading and assessing their writing over the course of several weeks. Important to note is while there is a great deal of linguistic diversity in the class, Lee saw most student’s proficiency levels as intermediate to relatively high, and in several cases, MLL writing proficiency was higher than NS writing proficiency. The most variance in assessing students came through the category of engagement, where there did seem to be a trend toward higher student engagement amongst NS students, a trend reflected throughout the observations I conducted over the quarter.

3.2.3 Material Conditions of the Classroom Space

Lee’s classroom space could be defined as a typical classroom space for the types of courses taught in the EWP. The classroom spaces are randomly assigned on the basis of availability and while they are always large enough to hold the maximum enrollment

(22) students, size and layout varies greatly. Lee's particular classroom space was quite small (as she described at one point, "we are packed in there like sardines"). The amount of student desks were 24 with one small table at the front as the instructor space. The desks typically were aligned in a set of four forward facing rows while they were often moved to facilitate different types of classroom interactions. In larger group discussions, the rows were maintained, while when Lee administered small group interactions, the desks were moved in small circular clusters of 3 to 4 desks (like on peer review days). Because the class size was small and cramped, it did often prohibit Lee's ability to circulate as much as she would have liked to, often interfering with her ability to check in on and engage with group interactions. She would admit when we talked after observations that she was not always able to assess the level of interaction and activity effectively between students for this reason, especially amongst students who spoke more quietly. This especially became an issue during peer review sessions, when Lee wasn't always able to play the role of monitor and mediator as much as she would have liked to.

The classroom space also had two large windows on one side which did let a great deal of light in. Because the class was held in the Spring, there were often quite sunny days in the classroom. Lee wondered in our conversations at times if it was the general fatigue of the Spring Quarter or the appeal of the sunshine (admittedly infrequent in the Pacific Northwest climate) that may have impacted a lack of overall student participation on the part of students.

As mentioned, there is great variance amongst the type of classroom assignments TAs receive each quarter, and the level of technology available is yet another aspect of

materiality that TAs cannot always depend on. In the case of Lee, she did have a mobile data projector cart and screen installed in her classroom which she used frequently to hook up her own laptop, show presentations, allow students to show presentations, and also show media such as videos and TV shows which was quite relevant for the topical nature of her course. She did in some ways utilize a hybrid approach to technology through the use of her course website (where students could access discussion boards) and often assigned for them to view and answer questions about media they had observed outside of class.

Despite the integration of some technology, Lee approached her classroom space in a fairly traditional way, most commonly using paper handouts which she or her students had printed (such as the case with peer review) and also made frequent use of the classroom chalkboard for agendas, discussions, and mapping out conversations and reporting out from groups after group activities. Despite an interest in cultivating a “student-centered” classroom, Lee did engage her classroom in a manner where the instructor was centralized at the front of the classroom, while students faced her to engage in course content (with the exclusion of group activities which were commonly at least one aspect of the 2 hour class period). Some students (probably about a 3rd on average each day I visited) chose to bring laptops to class for notetaking and accessing of course materials, although doing so wasn’t required by Lee.

Lee and I talked midway through the quarter about her feelings about her classroom space. She observed that there was a good amount of natural light that she did think “helped people be awake, alert, relatively happy when it was nice out.” Further,

despite being a very small and somewhat confined classroom space, the small desks made it “REALLY easy to move around to get into small groups” She also observed that the fact that the space was so small (at least in her experience) “helped foster some community intimacy and, of course, we got to build camaraderie through jokes about being sardines.” Although she didn’t mention having difficulty with mobility herself when we had talked directly about the space, it was something that came up other times, and I had observed when group work was taking place, that it was more difficult for Lee to reach groups in the back of the room as much as engage with and oversee groups in the front part of the room. However, it was clear that students were able to themselves get into groups quite easily, and also were forced to be physically close to one another, which in many ways does promote interaction in group work. Lee also described some of the challenges of the classroom space, and one she identified was “the tech (or lack thereof).” Despite having the projector cart, she complained that because of the size of the room and number of desks, it was often “VERY difficult to find a space for it, to get it situated, and to not totally take over a student’s work space.” I also observed the cart as being cumbersome in the way Lee described, particularly on one day when students were giving group grammar presentations. Making “room” for everything and everyone did seem to be a bit of a challenge, but Lee still maintained a good amount of activity diversity, and didn’t shy away from making use of the technology she had available. Related to the “lack of technology” issue, Lee also described challenges with the chalkboard (versus a whiteboard which some classrooms are equipped with). As mentioned, Lee made frequent use of her chalkboard, but expressed that this medium

makes “collating info very difficult” and specifically talked about challenges during the peer review conversation (which will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 4). In addition to making collating difficult for her, she also feels it presents students with more reading challenges than do whiteboards. Students, overall, were not very frequent notetakers in Lee’s class, and it is worth considering the relationship between the chalkboard and this practice (or lack thereof).

Lee’s classroom space very much seemed to influence some of the opportunities and limitations she felt as an instructor, but also appeared to influence students’ experiences in the class, especially those related to engagement and interactivity, as will be shown through my observations of the class dynamics in the following section.

3.3 Class Dynamics

During the Spring Quarter, I observed Lee’s class on a weekly basis. My goal in observing was to gain a more thorough perspective about the dynamics of the class as a whole, paying special attention to aspects of interactivity and levels of participation.

3.3.1 Class Activities and Teaching Approaches

When we spoke at the start of the quarter, Lee described her use of daily lesson plans as a way to scaffold each upcoming weekly assignment. In her two day a week class (where each class is an hour and fifty minutes), each week she first introduces the upcoming prompt (on Tuesday) and they spends some time discussing the prompt very “concretely” in terms of expectations, what they’re being evaluated on, and what outcomes are being targeted. For example, the week they had to write Short Assignment

2 (the letters between two scholars), the attention that week was focused on the articles they were working with as well as Outcomes 1 and 2, focusing on context and use of sources, respectively. Since students had identified concerns about embodying the voice of someone else (an aspect of the task), Lee helped them by identifying both the style of the authors' writing voices as well as the key components of the authors' arguments. She elaborated:

Because they were worried about actually being able to mimic those voices authentically in their letters, so I told them, that's what we're going to spend almost the entire week doing then, is looking first at their actual writing style, we spent a lot of time on sentence construction and word choice and with motivation, assumptions being made, and then we moved into the actual fine points of the argument itself, and it's all geared then toward their ability to then portray these arguments and these writing styles in these letters.

In this sense, not only does Lee see class time spent as essential in preparing students for upcoming assignments, but she also likes to remain flexible and responsive to student concerns in relation to assignments. Class time, for Lee, is best spent both actively engaging students' expectations outside of class, but also most productive when students are working together with her in class to address common concerns and work together in a manner that promotes interest, investment, and engagement through collaboration.

She explained how creating a collaborative learning environment through a variety of class activities and teaching approaches was essential toward her goals of amplifying engagement. She explained:

I try to do at least one group activity per day, which is why I prefer two hour classes because I feel there's more time for group work and for the groups to spend time together developing ideas, arguments, breaking down analysis, doing

reverse outlines, but then also time to spend some time together at the end to report it out and then bring it all together as a larger group.

Lee recognized it as her responsibility to help cultivate a productive learning environment, and she thinks getting students comfortable with each other is necessary for optimal engagement. Activities like structured debates, for example, for Lee, became a tool that helped “rip the bandaid off to get them comfortable talking with each other and in front of the classroom.” Getting students comfortable talking was certainly an issue that I observed throughout the quarter, in that many students seemed reluctant to speak openly and freely in a larger group discussion context. While Lee did, as she said, have at least one group activity per day, each day I observed also included some large group discussion that would involve some element of lecture and somewhat freeform discussion where Lee calls upon students who offer to speak, and the discussion may have a focus, but oftentimes, will just be a response-oriented conversation about students’ reactions to a particular text. Lack of student participation became a concern for Lee early on, not only in her observation of small group but larger group discussions as well.

During the third day of class (which I observed), Lee had students do a reverse outline (where students work backward to track the main points of an argument) of an academic text and then reported out as a larger group. I noticed that many students were very quiet in-group work as well as in the large group discussion (where a small number of NS male students tended to dominate the conversation). When Lee and I spoke after her class, she commented that “students were a little slow to engage and not super talkative, but they were still able to generate a clear and effective outline for the review that was simultaneously accurate, complex, and a clear model for what their first writing

assignment should look like.” She did report issues related to time management, in recognizing that it seemed as though students needed more time to report out. She explained that the next time she did a similar activity, she planned to “counter-act this . . . by assigning each group a specific section of the worksheet rather than trying to work through the entire thing (and also to hold different groups accountable for specific sections which will hopefully get some new voices talking).”

The connection between smaller group activities and larger group discussions, for Lee, is quite strategic, in that she sees it as a way to bridge toward students’ participation:

In terms of group dynamics, the layout of the room makes it really difficult to circulate and a lot of students were talking very quietly, but I kept an eye out for and did in fact see a number of my most reserved students commenting on the text in their groups and making some really insightful points, especially in terms of criticism. This is actually what I believe is most useful in group discussions: it not only holds students accountable to the readings (it's pretty obvious in group work who has and has not done the work), but it also requires students to engage in academic conversations in a much lower stakes environment. Many of my students seem quite talkative in groupwork but much less willing to speak to the class as a whole.

While theoretically this was Lee’s goal in structuring her lessons, early on in our conversations, Lee recognized that despite her best efforts, there did seem to be demographic-based issues that were impacting the participation levels in the class. She explained further:

The gender discrepancy was absolutely the first thing I noticed when looking at the class list. I do, in fact, have female students that participate semi-regularly, but certainly my three most vocal students are male. This is only the third class session so I hope that changes a bit, but it definitely bothers me. The history of classroom culture has long favored the male voice, especially in high school, and I would love to find new ways to help open up my classroom to dampen if not eliminate that uneven power distribution. I'm hoping that more group work that asks groups to work on different tasks will help get people talking and maybe

once that happens, they'll feel more comfortable to do so on their own in larger group discussions. I also see some intersectionality at work in terms of gender and language. Not only are my most vocal students generally male, they are also generally native English speakers. The quietest students, by contrast, are generally both female and non-native speakers. There are several different dynamics at work, then, but that ultimately coalesce around ideas of speaker power and privilege. My goal thus far has just been to provide as safe a space as I can for my students to openly share ideas and to use group work to get students talking at all in the hopes that they can translate those conversations from smaller groups to larger ones.

Lee's notion of "creating a safe space" is cultivated through a variety of teaching techniques, as she aims to give student entry points into participation across a variety of activities within class (such as freewriting and addressing it directly in class discussions) and outside of class (through written feedback and one-on-one conferences). Peer review is yet another means by which students can engage and participate in a different way as well, and as will be discussed later, students who did not typically participate and engage in larger class discussions did seem to have more opportunities for interaction and communication, something Lee very much strived for throughout the duration of her class in light of what could be interpreted as participation "barriers," at times related to language or gender divides.

3.3.2 Freewriting

Through observation and discussions with Lee, I learned that she utilizes what she describes as "freewriting," or low-stakes, anonymous, spontaneous, handwritten writing as a daily activity in her class. About this approach, she said, "I have always chosen to make my free-writes anonymous so that students would feel less confined." She feels that because so many students are concerned with their grades and with saying what they

think she wants to hear that they don't often actually “feel free, it seems, to put their own ideas on paper.” For Lee, freewriting allows for students to express themselves, but also helps her to benefit from that expression in a way that can guide her practice. In regard to this notion, she described, “a lot of my free write questions are about what they see as the utility of certain activities and their sense of specific readings, and anonymity seems to ensure more honesty.” In this way, like most of Lee’s pedagogical approaches, the goals of freewriting are multifaceted.

She commonly uses freewriting as a tool to help her gauge students’ level of comprehension and assess “where they’re at” with respect to the course content. Lee explained to me that because she recognizes that not all students actively participate in all activities, in particular large group discussions, she uses the freewrites as a way to see whether students who are not visibly participating are still benefitting from the time spent in class. Generally, she gives them at the mid-point or end of the class after the students have experienced some of the lesson.

Creating multiple ways for students to participate is something Lee actively strives to do, recognizing not all students feel comfortable participating in traditional ways, such as large group discussions; however, she often utilized large group discussions (each day I observed with the exclusion of peer review days), maintained their value, and actively worked throughout the quarter to bolster engagement amongst her students, particularly those who seemed more reluctant toward participation.

3.3.3 Whole Class Discussions and Group Work

As time went on in Lee's class, she continued to pair smaller group activities with larger group discussions, aiming to amplify engagement and participation in both areas. Rather than having students all work on the same material as she did earlier on (which seemed to encourage the participation of just a few very vocal students), she instead started having each group be responsible for entirely different materials so that they were "were beholden to the rest of the class to provide the information."

As a result, I noticed, as did Lee, that there was a somewhat elevated level of participation. Lee commented,

It had students talking who hadn't talked before, and other students were really paying attention to each other and taking lots of notes, and the group work itself sounded a lot more productive as I was walking around, which was nice, because the groups all knew that they had to present something, so they were all working really hard on doing that. And it also made the reporting out a lot more organized, much more clear, so we were actually able to get everything up on the board, gave everyone a chance to share rather than having everyone rush through.

She noted the way this change seemed to have impacted the smaller group dynamics, but still acknowledged having issues with participation in the larger group discussions, something I had been observing as a continual issue as well. On a given day I observed, the same 3-4 Native Speaker Male students dominated about 80% of the discussion talk time. After several weeks of observation, there were students I had never heard speak in class at all (these students were mainly females and Non-Native Speakers). Around mid-way through the quarter, Lee started to get more creative about ways to encourage participation, and in the 6th week, she brought Hershey Kisses to hand out to each student who participated. Each time they would offer something to the class,

she would throw them a Hershey Kiss. On this day, I observed the same students who regularly participate acquiring between 8 and 12 pieces of chocolate, while other students had only two or three and in many cases, none. The demographic breakdown seemed consistent with previous weeks (a high level of male NS participation and a low level of both NS female, NNS male, and the NNS female students as the lowest.)

Given the numerous issues Lee was having with participation and engagement with group discussions, I asked her if she thought there was still value to students who were not participating, especially in cases where there are a few very dominant students. She responded:

I mean, I certainly hope they are and that's sort of why I use the freewrites to take the temperature of the class, to see if they're actually retaining the information from group discussions. Um, and then I also try to pay attention to things like body language.

On the day we spoke, she mentioned two students in the back (male NNSs) who she observed having some side chatter and then one of those two who occasionally had his eyes closed. At one point she asked them if they had something to share with the class, which brought the chatter to a close, but did bring up some concerns for Lee about the level that those not actively participating in discussion were actually benefitting. She explained:

It does make me wonder to what extent they're engaging and finding what their peers are presenting as valuable, which is why I also try to do a lot of affirmations. Because I think that a lot of my students, even if they are dominating class discussions, are contributing valuable information and summarizing things in really clear and concise ways that I wouldn't have thought to do, or pointing to things that I wouldn't have thought to point to, um so I try to be like, you know, that's great, or I try to make it clear that this information is valuable, but there is always a struggle with trying to get them to take each other seriously sometimes, and getting them to respect both me and each other.

On this particular day, I also had observed these students in the back and knowing that they are both from Thailand, it occurred to me that perhaps they were explaining or translating something to each other, something I have seen in observations of other classes and even my own between NNSs, especially when one has better listening comprehension than the other. Language based issues in relation to large discussion participation was not something Lee and I talked about, but modes of exclusion or alienation certainly seem likely in a classroom environment like this one, where there are several very confident and vocal students who tend to steer the conversations in certain directions. Additionally, while on numerous occasions, Lee has described Pop Culture texts as “entry points” for students, especially as a means to empower student expertise on a topic, “Pop Culture” is certainly an arena that varies greatly across cultural contexts. Many group conversations I observed brought up numerous references to American TV shows, blogs, websites, etc. that all students in the class may not have had familiarity with. Because classroom participation is something that each instructor views differently, I asked Lee how she assessed participation, and how her students understood it, in other words, was active participation framed as an actual expectation in her class? Lee explained,

Yea, I mean I’m pretty lenient with it. I tell them that participation is 30% of their grade of course, and that a lot of it is turning work in on time and participating in discussion boards online, and I do tell them, you know, peer review is mandatory, completing worksheets, verbally giving feedback to your peers is required, but in terms of in group discussions, in terms of talking in class, I tell them I understand that some people are just not comfortable talking in class, and if that’s an issue for you, please let me know, and then discussion boards online are where you can sort of be more comfortable finding your voice. I mean part of it is because I am sympathetic to students who are really downright uncomfortable and shy speaking

in front of their peers and I understand that, but at the same point in time, I struggle with being understanding and too lenient I think.

Giving multiple types of opportunities for students to engage is very important to Lee, even as she noted a tension between maintaining student-centeredness and authority. The experiences she had in the class with seeming lack of participation didn't discourage her from keeping doing them, and she herself talked about the ways in which she valued them for the overall class dynamic, "just in terms of the things that sort of come to light and the amount of time we're able to spend with each other and the material," but also set forth the challenge for herself to "find new ways to make it more productive that does not entail giving a piece of chocolate to a student every time that they talk and trying to toss it..."

Lee also attempted other "creative" ways to get students to participate more in class, for example on one particularly sunny day she decided to take the class outside to the Quad area of campus and have students sit in a large circle to generate and brainstorm topics for their second major paper. The change of environment certainly did disrupt and impact the dynamics of the class, in some ways for the better, in some ways, less so. The level of noise and passersby did make it difficult for discussion, as hearing voices was a particular challenge (especially for the quieter students), but in comparison to other days I observed, there was more of a variety of voices. On this particular day, students were sharing their research topics and also their research experiences, so they may have felt more ownership and comfort with the material than in previous weeks when they were discussing readings or content; however, it did seem that the environmental shift promoted more interaction amongst students. When Lee and I chatted after this day, she

admitted that taking the class outside was a spur of the moment decision she made when she observed the nice weather and sensed some general fatigue on the part of the class. She felt that it was successful in getting a few more students involved, although did notice some of the same students remaining silent, even in the outdoor environment.

Lee attempted other “creative” approaches to engage students more in group discussions, and during Week 7, when she was aiming to scaffold them toward their second Major Paper (the pop culture analysis of a topic of their choosing), she decided to set up a “proposal bidding” where students would present their topics through “keyword frames” (building off of the short assignment from the previous week where she had asked students to “craft a focused, targeted inquiry and definition of the keyword/critical lens that you will be exploring in your MP2 pop culture text” as way for students to initiate the inquiry process that would eventually lead into the claim they would develop for MP2) and the rest of the class would use Hershey’s kisses to “bid” on the topics and frames that they thought were the most interesting and effective. The goal of the lesson, as Lee described, was to gauge audience feedback on students’ topic and help refine them so that they could do further research for their upcoming Annotated Bibliography assignments. As Lee explained the lesson for the day, she emphasized that it was important both that “they have a frame, and modify their frame as they go into the annotated bib.”

Lee explained that each student will have 3-4 minutes to share and discuss their keywords, and writes the following directions on the board:

- What is your keyword?
- How might it structure future analysis?
- Why is it a good starting point for analysis?
- What are the stakes?
- Why is this kind of framework important?
- What considerations/questions from the group?

After walking through each question, Lee also reminded students to “think about stakes in terms of *why* you think your project should get funded.”

Throughout this activity, each student shared their various topics, and then their classmates could ask them questions to find out more. Students volunteered to speak up; Lee didn’t call upon them. What I observed on this particular day was far more participation and interaction than I had seen in previous weeks, especially in terms of hearing from student voices who weren’t typically heard.

For example, one NNS male (who infrequently speaks) shared his topic of the “post-apocolyptic phenomemon” and explained that he wanted to analyze Mad Max and look at why society romanticizes it. In response, two NNS females (who also infrequently speak) asked him questions; one asked him to explain what Mad Max was while another student asked him to talk about the relationship (if any) to gender. For each question, the student gave thorough and analytical answers.

In another instance, another NNS male student talked about his keyword “homophobia.” A NNS female (who doesn’t often speak) asked him to define it. A NS male then asked him to explain where he will focus on, to which he responded the “U.S”. Another NNS female chimed in and asks him to describe which pop culture text he will use for his analysis. He then told them he wants to focus on the show “Greys Anatomy,” specifically on two lesbian characters. A NS male then asked him whether or not he

thought homophobia is related to morals or religion, something that could have some connection to the stakes of his project.

In both of these examples, there were very interactive conversations occurring within the larger group amongst some students who typically do not speak up much in class (particularly the NNSs).

I also observed a good level of balance when it was the NSs who were presenting their topics as well. In one case, a NS male who talks frequently shared his word as “nerd” but explained that he didn’t really have a fully formed project. A NNS girl who rarely talks in class asked him several clarifying questions and then suggested he look at the show “The Big Bang Theory” as a potential text for analysis. In another case, a NS male who is a frequent voice in class discussion talked about his topic of artificial intelligence and explained that he was interested in exploring the relationship between humans and technology. He wanted to analyze the video game Portal and asked his classmates if they knew it. Because many didn’t, he had to explain it to them in some detail. At this point, several students began to give suggestions of how he could focus his topic or use other more familiar texts. One NS male suggests he talk about “technophobia” or “technosexuality”, while a NNS female discussed a British show that is related to his topic in which a girl turns a robot into her boyfriend. Another NNS female chimed in to talk about a movie about robotic dogs. In both of these cases, despite the topics being initiated by NS males who frequently “dominate” conversations, there was a good amount of back and forth and collaboration between diverse voices within the classroom.

Further, the context-specific questions (in which students probed the speakers for more information about their topics) proved to be crucial, as Lee reiterated to them midway through the activity that the fact that they were needing to explain the context of their topics was very good preparation for what they would have to do as well in their upcoming major papers. There were a couple of instances where the context did seem to get in the way of interaction, for instance when one male NS who frequently talks shared his topic of entertainment talk shows and keyword of “gotcha journalism”. He began talking in depth about the differences between The Daily Show and Bill O’Reilly without explaining much context, and it seemed evident that some students in the class were confused. As a result, the conversation quickly became a narrow conversation between the student and another NS male (where they talked about CSpan for some time). This situation was also mimicked later on between two NNS females, when one shared her topic of “young nostalgia” and interest in analyzing this phenomenon in Chinese movies. The other asked her what movie she was looking at and the two discussed some very specific details of the movie together for a couple of minutes with no other students chiming in.

Lee had a distanced role throughout the lesson, where she was circulating and chiming in at times, but mostly, she was “timekeeping”, letting students know when they should be wrapping up and moving onto the next student. Although of course it was required in this lesson that all students speak up at least once (when they shared their topics), the questions and comments were not required, and still many students seemed to be interested and encouraged to engage much more so than they had in past conversations

I had observed, which was perhaps due to the more structured approach with a goal (the bidding rather than just free-form discussion), or even that students were more interested in the topics and ideas being discussed (in many ways they were less “academic” than previous discussion). Finally, it seemed to present an opportunity for students to share their knowledge and expertise, not just on their own topics, but also to contribute to their classmates’ topics as well. While this was definitely an atypical group discussion in many ways, it did demonstrate some level of amplified student engagement, particularly when looking at the diversity of voices heard as well as the collaborative nature of the type of interactions that took place (which in many ways is similar to those of peer review). Although it wasn’t framed this way or described in this way by Lee, the activity very much mimicked the same types of interactions students share during peer review, especially the act of question asking and clarification for context as well as the “evaluative” component enhanced by the act of “bidding”. When examining the second peer review (which will be explored in Chapter 5), this activity very much seemed to influence students and in some ways, appeared to be an informal scaffold toward peer review, especially by having them focus on the specific expectations of the MP2 (which requires understanding the importance of context because of the nature of the unique topics each student had). When Lee and I spoke after this particular class, she expressed being very pleased with how the class had gone, and also explained that the idea to add some level of competition to it came from a lesson prior to MP1, where she had an “MLA Olympics” and students “got really into it” and seemed to positively respond to the competitive environment. Such a response encouraged her to find other ways to integrate

competition, with the ongoing concern of enhancing classroom participation amongst more students.

While classroom discussion engagement as well as classroom interactivity was a concern for Lee throughout the quarter, it is the nature of a class like this that much of the instruction actually occurs outside of the classroom on the more individuated level, through written feedback and one-on-one conferences. In fact, much of the reason for the small class-sizes comes through the department's recognition that ample time is spent doing so on the part of instructors, and for Lee, this is an aspect of her instruction that she takes quite seriously.

3.3.4 Feedback and Conferences

Written Feedback

As discussed previously, Lee utilizes a multi-draft approach to her assignment sequence which allows her to be more strategic in terms of the way she gives feedback (by targeting different content and skill areas in different drafts), which aligns with the first pathway (as outlined by the EWP policy explained in Chapter 2): "Revision Throughout: Fewer Assignments, Multiple Drafts of Each." In addition to multiple drafts, however, Lee also utilizes the second pathway: "Higher Order" Feedback and "Lower Order" Cueing for Self-Editing Throughout the Quarter" which entails focusing on higher order content concerns (such as argument, evidence, stakes, organization, etc.) while simultaneously "cueing" students to patterns of structural error as a means to promote students' self-editing strategies throughout the quarter.

In the first draft, as a follow-up to peer review, Lee emphasizes students focusing on their peer feedback they receive in the peer review. She helps them do this by working with them in conference, helping them navigate which peer feedback to address in the development of their second draft. And then in the second draft, she focuses primarily on the instructor feedback she provides them. In her feedback structure, Lee utilizes marginal comments and end comments. She uses marginal comments in more targeted ways, for example to highlight specific places “where either things are working or not working” and then uses an end comment as “a more summative, overall this is what’s working well, overall your argument is doing this.” When we discussed her feedback approach, Lee mentioned that she has had a lot of positive feedback from students about her particular styles, which she describes as a “balance between sort of specific argumentative stuff and then overall structural concerns, coupled with the reading through error stuff and highlighting grammar trends rather than giving editorial remarks on every grammar issue.”

The variance of feedback approaches that balance different types of concerns for students extends to very specific practices for Lee as well; in particular, she uses question-asking as a mode to promote revision and enhance particular writing skills. By using open-ended questions, Lee explains that this “requires students to give more concrete feedback, to really think through the papers as a whole and the effects writing decisions have on (them as) readers,” something she sees very much necessary for their own writing development and fulfillment of the outcomes (especially in the final portfolio where they have to articulate their writing choices. Beyond her own use of

questions as a practice, she also explained to me that questions in feedback often emerge from the students themselves, through Writer's Memos, where students pose questions to Lee that they have about their own writing, which she attempts to respond to directly when giving feedback on their drafts.

When analyzing Lee's written feedback over the quarter, I examined her approach to "targeted" marginal comments, where she often engages practices of both praise and encouragement as well as generative question-asking tactics and specific revision-based advice often stemming from moments of confusion or lack of clarity.

Sample 1:

Ten years ago, when people were asked to picture the books they read, (they probably) came up with all sorts of books with different covers. But if you ask the same question to people in this generation, a lot of the pictures people have would be an electronic reading device. Essentially, paper books and e-books are almost identical in their purpose that they both allow users to ride on a magic carpet and take an adventure inof the world of the book. Many argue that because of their similarity in primary function, the increase in popularity in e-books signifies the end of paper books. This is a powerful claim that makes a prediction relevant to many individuals. If the market's demand on paper books diminishes because of e-books, publishers would produce more e-books to ensure profit maximization. On the other hand, if e-books do not have the power to kill paper books, there exists a market that separates the two products, meaning that they can coexist and flourish in their own market. Therefore, it is important for one to discern whether e-books perfectly substitute paper books. Although it is often true that consumers prefer the good of cheaper price when they make a decision between two similar goods, a perfect substitution implies that the two products are identical that the only factor affecting consumers' behavior is the price, in which e-books have an absolute advantage over paper books. However, consumers do not see price as the only determinant to their decision. While e-books are appealing to readers because they are environmentally friendly, convenient,

Comment [AB1]: Be careful with tone here. This opens your paper with an assumption that you yourself undercut with ambiguous language.

Comment [AB2]: Good.

Comment [AB3]: This feels pretty vague. What are you arguing here?

Comment [AB4]: The personifying verbs of killing and murdering you're using in your paper feel a little odd. What do you gain in using this formulation? There seems to me a much more nuanced and scholarly way of framing this issue that might lend your authorial voice more credibility.

Comment [AB5]: This seems a key distinction. Can you develop it more? It's good.

Comment [AB6]: This sounds a little awkward, especially when you repeat it below.

Comment [AB7]: I think you're making a really good point here, but you are wording it a bit confusingly.

Sample 2:

[Art: it is a human created work that incorporates skill and imagination, provoking an emotional response from its audience. The concrete definition is a widely debated topic, which is itself an entirely different discussion, but examining currently accepted art forms can help to produce a unified definition. Art forms such as music bring out emotional responses to its audience through its dynamics and melodies, whereas literature provokes a similar emotional response, but through the textual development of plot. In addition, other art forms such as painting, drawing, and photography bring out emotional responses even though the methodology may differ. With the rise of modern day technology, video games push the boundaries of a traditional understanding of art. Although videogames could be viewed as purely entertainment, through the culmination of music, plot and visual graphics, video games create a new, higher form of art that focuses on the interaction of the user, thus provoking emotional responses similar to these individual elements, but combined these elements create a new experience that is the art form of videogames.]

With modern technology, the ability to represent physical objects with accurate computer generated graphics has given video game developers the ability to recreate and reinvent their ideas through a digital medium, ultimately providing video games with its own style. There are many different forms of art such as abstract and realistic. Similarly, the graphics that make up a

Comment [AB1]: Your opening is nice.

Comment [AB2]: This is an awkward verb formation.

Comment [AB3]: It's difficult to describe the emotional response as similar when the response itself has not been described or defined.

Comment [AB4]: What do you mean by this, especially by "the methodology"?

Comment [AB5]: You have all the components of a really great complex claim here, but the organization, especially towards the end, is confusing. Also try to be more specific, especially in terms like "emotional responses" and the hierarchical categorization of video games as "a new, higher form of art."

Comment [AB6]: This is really good, but I think you can push yourself even further in terms of specificity. What kinds of ideas? What is distinctive about the style?

I also observed her use of end comments as indeed focusing primarily summative and higher-ordered concerns aimed at argumentative development, but also noticed trends in administering praise to students and building rapport.

Sample 1:

You are absolutely right in identifying your strength as your evidence from the primary text itself. Your choice to focus on three characters in very specific episodes is great, though I wonder why you don't just focus on "The Woman/Heroine" episode, as it seems to be where you derive most of your evidence. Furthermore, having a single episode where you can incorporate a clear narrative trajectory to your analysis could provide a crucial point of engagement for your audience. The same is true of the characters you include. I think you can make all three characters work here, but consider, in the future, the fact that focusing on the development of any one of these characters could easily yield a really persuasive paper (especially if your analysis spans several episodes). You are also right about the need for greater quote integration, but it seems that you have a sense of how to go about correcting this. Just make sure that you introduce your quotes (where they come from) and then analyze them (how do they connect with your main argument? What do they reveal to the audience?). Building on this intertextual work will position you as a more reliable scholar and have a much greater persuasive effect on your audience. Your topic is compelling: just push your analysis for depth and specificity. Remember that you have an audience that you are trying to convince. Your passion is clear and you've done some really good work here. Keep it up!

Sample 2:

Your focus on organization is really clear in this draft. You clearly signpost for your audience and it is relatively easy to follow. The only problem is that while the organization itself makes sense, your paragraph all seem to tackle your main claim in a somewhat limited capacity. I think you need to limit your scope even further, and you can do this in one of two ways: you can either go back to an exclusive focus on children's movies or you can try to be more specific and consistent with your emphasis on capitalism and the Culture Industry (the latter option seems to be more of what you're interested in). Either way, you'll want to make sure you focus clearly on your main argument in each of your supporting paragraphs and also explain how you're reaching your conclusions. I think the conclusions you are drawing are compelling and I can *imagine* how you've reached them, but you need develop your analysis much more to be persuasive to an outside audience. In short, your content is there, you just need to rein it in, develop it, and think about what you want to communicate to your audience and how you want to do it most effectively.

Lee draws upon a number of terms related to course outcomes and specific assignment expectations while engaging students in very directive advice aimed at draft development, as she sees her feedback (and feedback in general) as an integral part of the writing and revision process. The samples above were provided to give a visualization of Lee's feedback style, which remained consistent across the quarter and across students both in length and tone. The relationship between Lee's feedback approach and students' feedback styles in peer review will be discussed more in depth later in the analysis of the peer reviews, where I will analyze for patterns of similarity to Lee's discursive and rhetorical strategies in providing student feedback, something clearly relevant for Lee as

she both encourages students to use her feedback as a model and actively engages both means of feedback as a source for revision in her one-on-one conferences.

One-on-one Conferences

Lee also meets with students twice a quarter to discuss their writing development and class experiences in a one-on-one conference. She sees her conferences as an extension of her feedback approach, and further, as an opportunity to help students develop confidence in their writing abilities and writing progress. She explains further:

I really enjoy one-on-one interactions with students, I really value that sort of one-on-one rapport, and I focus a lot of my verbal feedback on confidence building, regardless of language status or even class status. I work a lot with students on developing their own voice and developing confidence in their own ideas and positioning themselves as experts within the topics they're working as a way to persuade audiences more effectively and make sure that they're balancing their argument with secondary sources which tend to get sort of drowned out when they're privileging expert research with their own.

Writer's Memos

Another strategy Lee employs in relation to her feedback strategy entails asking students to include Writer's Memos in each one of their drafts. These memos are short informal reflective notes students write directly to Lee where they articulate their writerly choices and describe what they feel is successful in the draft, how they are meeting the expectations of particular outcomes, and express specific areas of concern in their revisions. As she explains, Lee uses these memos as a basis of conversation between her and the student, a way to direct her feedback more specifically, and as a tool to promote metacognition and scaffold toward the final portfolio, where students are asked to write a

reflective cover letter that makes an argument for how they have fulfilled the expectations of the outcomes.

Lee recounted experiences with students where they were able to feel less anxious about the final cover letter because of their completion of so many Writer's Memos throughout the quarter, something she feels is both necessary and beneficial because it is somewhat of a unconventional genre. She explained, "I've also had conversations with students where they're like "Oh I'm writing this cover letter and I'm terrified of it, but it's like what I've already done though, right?" And I'm like "Yes!"

In a later conversation with Lee, she also let me know that based on the success of her Spring Quarter peer reviews and in recognition of the value in scaffolding the cover letter more clearly, she now does formal peer reviews of the cover letters. In addition to helping students get feedback, she also recognizes the value in having students see how other students are discussing the outcomes as well, and at the very least, it forces students to start their cover letters earlier than they might have otherwise. As a result, she reported that her cover letters in subsequent classes have actually gotten much stronger.

In addition to helping students scaffold toward the final cover letter and directly engaging with metacognition (part of Outcome 1), Lee also sees a connection between Writer's Memos and peer review. Because she sees it as an activity that "requires students to actively engage with their own writing choices and helps them to see writing as a process," she feels that having consistently produced them from the beginning of her class helps prepare students better for peer review sessions. Using memos as a guide, Lee feels that students "are better able to articulate their specific needs for review

feedback to their peer reviewers” and in turn, “are also better able to view their peer's papers as "in process" with a clearer idea of what next steps should be like. In this way, Writer’s Memos serve multiple functions and goals throughout the development and collaboration of their writing.

3.4 Peer Review

Peer review, for Lee, is something that integrates both group work and feedback in a way that is designed as yet another scaffolding tool for the development of writing and particular writing-based skills. In the following section, I will describe Lee’s philosophy and approach to peer review as a way to frame the analysis of the peer reviews that took place in her class, presented in the next chapters.

3.4.1 Peer Review Philosophy and Experience

Much like other strategies and activities Lee employs in her classroom, peer review has been one that she has developed over time in response to her past teaching experiences. She talked to me about the way her flexibility has made space for improvements that benefit students. She also described the process she had developed that she planned to utilize this quarter:

What I ended up doing, which I think has been the most useful, is creating our own peer review worksheet. So spending an entire day talking about what have been your positive and negative experiences with peer review, what do you want out of peer review, we’re all using the same assignment prompt here, so what specifically about this prompt are you looking for in your own paper, what do you think I’m looking for in your own paper, um, and then developing a list of questions together. And that usually ends up being between 10-15 questions that

are not yes or no questions, that are things like “what’s the strongest point in my organization and what’s my weakest point? How can I improve my claim? Is it clear what my counterargument is? What is it?” And those are questions that the students themselves generate and they... and I tailor the worksheet and distribute it on peer review days, so they’re seeing their actual questions on the page so they’re more invested in it. Uh, and then also allowing time for the peer review itself, again, talking a lot about mutual respect and being invested in each other’s work.

Here, Lee connects the activity of peer review to her philosophies of investment and mutual respect. She feels that by having explicit conversations about the process with students and having them participate in the task development, students are more engaged in the activity overall. Lee had mentioned when we talked at the beginning of the quarter that she had been continuously modifying and tweaking the way she organizes peer review since the start of the year, and some of that was in response to specific challenges she encountered through the activity. One issue that had come up for Lee was students tending toward grammar feedback in peer review sessions despite Lee instructing them explicitly to focus on higher order concerns, such as the claim itself, the structure of the paper, and the overall persuasiveness. Elevating this awareness is one of the reasons she likes to generate the peer review guide with students alongside the assignment prompt so that students can understand what is most important to focus on. Lee does acknowledge the usefulness of grammar feedback in some capacity, but also commented that “they tend to, in peer review groups, occasionally dominate the conversation, and that’s been a struggle in terms of me trying to shift discussion away from that explicit of a focus, and also students simultaneously wanting and not wanting that kind of help.”

The “kind of help” students want, in Lee’s view, has much to do with what their perception of “good writing” (grammatically perfect) and who has the authority to know what “good writing” is (often Native Speakers). Lee expands:

A lot of this also does come out in groups where there’s international students that are concerned and they’ve expressed to me embarrassment about their language skills, um, because they feel like that’s what they’re being judged on. And so when you get into a peer review group where students are expressing that same kind of judgment, it gets really problematic. I think that it shuts down conversations in a lot of ways. But at the same point in time, there are legitimate concerns where they struggle and I struggle in getting them to handle it in better and more productive ways.

This struggle comes when Lee recognizes that students are spending too much time working on grammar issues in a group but doesn’t know how much she should intervene, if at all. She wants to be encouraging toward students to advocate for themselves and the kind of feedback they want for their writing, but at the same time recognizes that many students don’t feel comfortable “taking control” of their peer groups. This is part of the reason for developing the worksheet together, so that they can have collective conversations about what the expectations are for the interactions. She also uses that discussion as an opportunity to extend her own feedback philosophy to students, particularly in regards to grammar, where she encourages students to note significant trends if it seems relevant, but not to scrutinize every sentence.

The worksheet in particular is something that Lee discussed as being successful for her, something that has been affirmed in student feedback. She has found in her experience that students do engage with the worksheet and stay on task, and one of the ways she encourages this is by making it essential for their participation credit. Another way she amplifies investment in the activity is by requiring that students specifically cite

and discuss their peer feedback in their final cover letter for Outcome 4, the outcome that focuses on revision. Part of the reason she employs such practices is because, as she explained in our conversations, she believes in the benefit of the activity (particularly from the standpoint of enhancing the amount of feedback students receive) while recognizing that at times students do need incentive to invest. When I asked Lee to explain why she felt peer review was so valuable, she explained:

It's both in terms of the feedback they're receiving, but again, also in terms of seeing what other people are doing in the classroom, especially in response to specific writing prompts. And also, I... I work very hard on trying to provide what I think is pretty good feedback, and really useful feedback, but I'm still just one person. And so, writing for me is always a collaborative process where you want different opinions and different ideas and different input. It's just the variety that peer review provides I think it's really helpful. And it also starts getting them prepared for further editorial comments that they have to deal with throughout their careers in terms of what feedback they do and do not incorporate because they very much seem to feel like they need to incorporate everything I say—a lot of them are very uncomfortable disagreeing with me, um, but they're more readily able to do that with each other because of the power dynamics that seem to be inherent in a lot of university classrooms, um, but also, you know, yeah, being selective about what feedback they receive in later projects in life as well and I think that's a really transferrable skill.

Expanding further about what the collaborative learning process in peer review can entail, particularly with respect to diverse classroom populations, Lee explained:

I think it's absolutely relevant to talk about the collaborative experience because, again, the dynamic, um, is very much influenced by not only peoples' cultural backgrounds, but by their academic backgrounds and their social backgrounds. ...um, and I think I mentioned this, again, in a roundabout way earlier, but students, a lot of international students that I've been working with most close and the ones that have been coming for the most help are the ones that feel embarrassed I guess about their language skills and so it makes them much more hesitant to participate in group conversations and unfortunately there are the occasional situations where the group dynamics sort of... breed that kind of anxiety.

Lee sees it as her role to reduce this anxiety if possible by monitoring and participating in conversations to both make sure students are being respectful of one another and also potentially bring some of the shyer students out of their shells. By doing so, she hopes that she is giving students more confidence in their ideas and thus encouraging them to share and participate. Another aspect of the collaborative learning process that Lee feels is important to shape is the way she organizes peer review groups, which she does strategically to mix different writing styles and writing strengths with the goal of bringing together a “unique blend of voices,” usually 3 students, and sometimes 4, depending on the class size and breakdown. I asked Lee to explain further her reasons for strategic grouping, and why she utilized it; she explained that she had let students self-select groups in previous quarters, but she had made this adjustment based upon a particularly negative student experience in the past quarter.

She described this student as a “very privileged white young man,” one who was a strong writer and a great student in many ways, but had a tendency in peer review groups with international students to “absolutely destroy sentence level issues after me repeatedly asking him not to and he would, uh, not do it in a respectful way.” Lee said that over time both she and her students came to recognize his behavior as lack of social awareness, but it was necessary for her to make some adjustments because his behavior was contributing to some classroom tensions. As a result, Lee began to

intentionally pair him with people that were more confident in themselves as the quarter progressed, which I think worked well, and they also challenged him a little bit, which was also healthy for him I think, and were able to stand up to him when he was tearing apart people’s papers. And oftentimes, incorrectly as well, tearing apart grammar issues incorrectly, so that was probably my most difficult peer review experience that I don’t want to have repeated in my classroom

because I can't imagine how it would feel to be on the receiving end of that. And I think a lot of it was his prejudice against Non-Native Speakers in terms of writing, and that he assumed that it was something to do with education or with intelligence when it's a language issue, and it has nothing to do with those issues, um, and so um trying to figure out ways to not let that happen and to protect students from that kind of thing happening while also not...not silencing other people as well.

Lee recognized from this experience that interactive issues like these are part of the risk when engaging in student-centered activities, and that situations will continue to come up and are in many ways unavoidable, but all she can do is respond, adjust, and continue to support her students the best she can.

In this particular case, it was strategic grouping that Lee used as a way to promote the best outcome in a "high risk" activity like peer review. This experience, along with an increased International student population, led Lee to adopt the practice of strategic grouping, and at the conclusion of our conversation, she also said, "I don't think I'll ever go back; I think I'm always going to do strategic placements."

In addition to strategic placement, Lee also takes seriously her responsibility in setting students up appropriately for the expectations of the peer review, and describes her role as being one "primarily related to framing and prep." During the activity itself, as described earlier, she plays a more distanced role of overseer and circulator, one who may or may not chime into conversations. The final role she sees herself playing in the peer review process is one of feedback "negotiator," someone who (through office hours or one-on-one conferences) can help students translate their peer feedback into productive writing development.

All of Lee's prior experiences very much informed her approach to peer review in Spring Quarter, and as with other practices, she appeared to remain very flexible toward adaptation within this quarter and toward future classes as well. In the next chapter, I will discuss how Lee administered her first peer review in her Spring Quarter class, as well as analyze the ecology of it through its preparation, execution, and interactional impacts.

CHAPTER 4: ECOLOGY OF THE FIRST PEER REVIEW

4.1 First Peer Review Set-Up

The class prior to the first Peer Review for Major Paper 1 (which occurred in the 4th week), Lee had a discussion with students about expectations and experiences with Peer Review that began with an anonymous freewrite designed to gauge student experience and generate discussion to explore students' attitudes toward peer review. She called this activity "Peer Review: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly." When Lee and I talked about this lesson beforehand, she described how after the freewrite is given, students report out and together they track on the board what kind of feedback is helpful and what kind wasn't, with the goal of preparing students to give "helpful" feedback to one another and avoid the types that are less helpful. She observed in the past that "that generally starts a little slow, but quickly picks up steam as students recall their best and (more frequently) worst peer review experiences." She finds that students are pretty quickly able to identify trends in the "good" and "bad" feedback experiences, and then that allows the class to "talk more concretely about what the *purpose* of feedback is, how it helps shape writing and writers (not just receiving feedback but also giving it), and

what really good feedback should actually look like.” Once this has been established, Lee explains, “we then concretely connect “good feedback” to the specifics of the prompt we are working with. And this is generally also where we formulate concrete review questions together.” On the day of this activity in her Spring Quarter class, Lee indeed began with a freewrite activity that she had written on the board, instructed students to handwrite their responses, and gave them 5 or so minutes to do so. Like all of Lee’s freewrites, this one would to be anonymous, students could use it to help in discussion, and Lee would also collect it at the end of class to help her get an idea of everyone’s responses (beyond the shared ones). The freewrite asked: 1. Do you think peer review is valuable? 2. Describe a good/bad experience with peer review. Of the 19 freewrites, 10 indicated finding peer review valuable, while 4 found it somewhat valuable, and 5 did not find it valuable. The students who talked about its value discussed how it was important to get multiple perspectives about your work and also recognized its benefit in providing students with suggestions for their revisions. Some students expressed concerns about feeling nervous about sharing their work, and others discussed it really depending on who your group members are and how seriously they are taking the task. Of the students who talked about it not being valuable, several expressed a preference for instructors’ comments over student comments. Below are a few samples from the collected freewrites (which although were anonymous, were representative of commonly held experiences and views amongst the class).

I think some of them (peer review) are valuable because peers can give me advice on their perspective, give me feedback on how to revise the paper. However, it requires peers to be engaged and active to do peer review. Some peers focus on

their own work and pay less attention to others', in this case, peer review is useless because they cannot give me helpful ideas.

Speaking of peer review, I think it becomes valuable when I do peer review for someone who has strong skills at writing than I do. I can actually learn a lot from my peers about how to write a good paper. For example, I was doing peer reviews for my classmates about the topic of globalization. At the end of the peer review, I gained a new perspective on the topic which help me expand the paper I wrote and elaborate it.

Personally, I think peer review is very useful. Because noone will do perfect work in one time, we need time to change, to correct and revise our work to become better as writers. Peer review is a good way to find out what's your strong part and weak part. When other students read your paper will give you a good suggestion and feedback for you to improve your writing. Other's suggestion is important, because everyone has different points and thoughts. To connect other's thoughts to make essay stronger, that's very powerful than one person.

Sometimes peer review is really valuable when your peers are really responsible and read my papers carefully and while sometimes peer review is really not at all. Some people will read article casually, they read your article only for finishing the homework. I prefer to conference with instructor rather than peer review.

I do not think peer review is that valuable. I would rather get the ideas and way to improve my writing from someone who is much more experienced in writing. Peer review can sometimes be distractive. I think the instructor or tutor can give me more valid advice about how to improve my writing. But the good thing is that we can get different ideas from others that we can probably use when we are writing in the future.

Lee had an open-ended discussion where students volunteered to share some of what they had written, and also discussed ways in which students could get the most out of their upcoming peer review. This included being respectful and also being constructive as well as focusing on the particular expectations for the assignment and outcomes.

Together, they identified the most important areas of feedback and generated a Peer

Review Worksheet together (See Appendix 12 for full worksheet). Primarily, students felt it important to focus on aspects of the argument, and specifically, examining components of the claim: counter argument, central claim, evidence, stakes, and signposting, all skills Lee had been working with them on up until that point of the quarter. Because Lee was having students directly engage with the assignment prompt, they were easily able to draw on the language of the prompt itself, much of which was directly using language from the course outcomes, such as developing a complex claim and engaging stakes (Outcome 3). Other skills, like “signposting” came up as important not because of engagement with the prompts, but as a result of a lesson Lee had given them the previous week. In this way, it seemed students were drawing upon numerous resources from within the class (lessons, outcomes, prompts) but also from outside of the class (based on previous experiences and expectations of what “good writing” is).

As such, aspects of clarity and reader response in terms of interest and persuasion also came up as important, which aligns with the opportunity for students to gain different points of view from the peer review, something most of them indicated valuing. Because the peer review would occur prior to the due date of the first Major Paper, students would have the opportunity to make revisions to their draft as well as conference with Lee about the nature of the comments.

By the end of the class, Lee instructed students to bring in a full draft the following class period, with 3 printed copies for their peer review groups, which she would let them know about at the start of class. She would be supplying the Peer Review Worksheets (which she would compile based on what they had generated that day). She

did not talk to them about the way she would be assigning their groups, nor did students ask, something that will become more relevant later on when discussing how students perceived Lee's approach to assigning peer review groups in Chapter 6.

The first peer review took place during the 4th week of the quarter and focused on the development of the Major Paper 1: A Critical Conversation about Pop Culture and the World. On the day of the first peer review, Lee had written the peer review groups on the board prior to students' arrival in class. She asked students to sit together in their groups, and began to hand out the worksheets with questions she created collectively from students. She also brought cookies and snacks. She instructed students to "get in small circles to face each other, so you can actually talk to each other."

Students started moving together, although not everyone seemed to know each other, so some needed to introduce themselves and confirm names. Lee didn't give any initial instructions, but as students begin exchanging papers and reading, one student asked: "Lee, do we mark the paper and this sheet?"

Lee responded:

Yea, and so also, with the worksheet, these should be good discussion questions for you, but since I know some people aren't always comfortable providing verbal feedback, so this is a place for you to take notes as well, and then you'll give that worksheet to the original author at the end so that they can take it home and look at it when they're revising later. And also, the original writer should also be taking notes on the things people are saying to them, you'd be surprised at the amount of things you can forget by the time you get home.

In the first few minutes, students began to quietly read and write. They didn't engage in any sort of initiating conversation, nor were they instructed to. After the groups initially identified each other and sat down, they immediately exchanged papers and

began reading. As Lee was circulating, she seems to notice that students may not necessarily be following the directions she had intended. She then made another announcement:

So remember too, that the most productive parts of these conversations happen when everyone is working on the same paper at the same time, so that you can all be talking to the author at the same time.

Upon this announcement, the class erupted in laughter, seemingly because the students weren't actually reading the same paper. Many students collectively shout out, "Ohhhhhhh!" and begin to laugh. Lee laughed along with them. Recognizing that students need a bit more guidance, Lee made a couple of additional announcements in the first few minutes:

Remember on Tuesday people said what would be useful for them is to see what actual reader responses were. So, if there is a moment in the paper where you actually have a strong feeling about it, like oh this makes me feel really alienated, or oh, this makes me laugh, this makes me feel really interested at this exact moment, that might be a good moment to touch base with the writer and let them know how you're feeling about it, and see if that's actually what they were intending to provoke in you.

And a few minutes later:

So I think it's good that people are reading the whole thing and then coming together and talking about it, I think that's a great strategy. But also keep in mind in the next five minutes or so you should be wrapping up and moving on to the next paper.

For the remainder of the peer review, students read each other's work, commented on their papers and on the worksheet, and had periodic discussions with each other about their feedback. Each student went one at a time, receiving about 30-35 minutes for both reading and conversational feedback. While students were working, Lee was circulating the room, listening in on conversations, and chiming in on some. Other parts of the class

she spent up at the front of the room, working on some of her own materials. Lee gave periodic announcements of five minute warnings letting students know when they should be finishing up and moving onto the next paper.

The ambiance in the class was one of varied energy, some groups were more talkative than others, some were very quiet. Students did seem to be writing on each others' papers and the worksheets more so than they were actually talking to one another, and as was also later affirmed in analysis of the conversations occurring; conversations tended to take place between two students at a time. There were few observed instances of lively conversations occurring between all group members, and some groups were primarily silent throughout the interaction. When Lee did circulate, she engaged with and built upon what students were conversing about, at times prompting them with further questions. Other times, she appeared to be more of a "listener," checking in on what students were discussing. As students were wrapping up their final conversations, Lee reviewed what she has written on the board:

- **For Tuesday: Don't come to the classroom! Conferences will take place in my office.**
- **For next Thursday (our next class session): Come prepared with some general reflections on the peer review process (what do you want more of? How could the next peer review be better?)**

She explained to students that they will be meeting with her one-on-one to discuss their peer reviews and instructs them to bring their printed drafts with peer comments, peer review worksheets, a handout she provides them at the end entitled "Tips for Incorporating Peer Review Feedback" (See Appendix 13) with the four questions

answered, along with any questions they have about moving forward with their draft.

After she provided the handout, she dismissed students from the class.

4.2 Discourse Analysis of the First Peer Review

To gain a clearer picture of the types of interactions that were occurring between students, I recorded student conversations between 2 peer review groups:

Group 1:

- Amy, 19, a NNS from Hong Kong with high level speaking and writing proficiency and a low level of classroom participation
- Matthew, 19, a NS and Japanese Bilingual with very high speaking and writing proficiency and an intermediate level of classroom participation
- Jake, 19, an English NS with very high speaking and writing proficiency and an intermediate level of classroom participation

Group 2:

- Travis, 21, an English NS with very high speaking proficiency, high writing proficiency, and a very high level of classroom participation
- Terrance, 19, an English NS with high levels of speaking and writing proficiency and an intermediate level of classroom participation
- Kai, a NNS from Thailand with an intermediate level of speaking and writing and a low level of classroom participation

I recorded the groups with audio recorders and later analyzed them for interactional patterns that might give insight into the nature of interactions that were occurring during the first peer review.

Overall, a trend that revealed itself had to do with timing. Lee would make an announcement in 35 minute increments that students should be moving onto the next paper; however, most students weren't finished in this time. The conversations would span 5-10 minutes beyond these announcements. Another trend that emerged was how, for the most part, despite students being in groups of 3, conversations tended to be

dominated by two students. It was difficult to tell through audio recording alone, but it appeared that some students took more of a “reader response” approach, where they would comment as they were reading along, while others waited until they had finished reading, and were urged to wrap up by Lee. After conducting a content analysis of the data, the following categories emerged as salient for analysis: Turn taking, talk time, question asking, and uptake. Within the category of uptake, I analyzed for course lexicon (which includes language of the outcomes, terms used within class, and those directly related to the peer review worksheet), evidence of instructor feedback discursive style (or utilizing feedback strategies similar to Lee), and monitored later drafts for the integration of peer feedback in a subsequent revision.

4.2.1 Turn Taking

As mentioned previously, the approach students took toward engaging in peer feedback conversation varied. Because of time constraints, the conversations between students were typically dominated by two students (the writer and one respondent) while, presumably, the unengaged respondent was still reading or focusing most of their attention on providing written feedback directly on the draft or on the peer review worksheet provided. This is difficult to speculate upon due to the limitations of the audio recording along and my inability to observe all of the interactions that took place at once, but given my observation that students were primarily engaged in reading, writing, listening and/or speaking for the duration of the activity, it seems to be a safe conclusion that a non-speaking group member was not necessarily an unengaged group member, but rather was engaged in a different activity than the other group members at times. This is

not to say that there was exclusion or disinterest either, but there did seem to be a tendency for spoken conversations to occur primarily between two students at one time with little balance of turn-taking between all group members. However, this was not always the case, as on occasion a quiet respondent would chime in to conversation (when Jake is advising Matthew on including a counterargument, and Amy, who had been quiet for some time, comes in with a suggestion for where he could do it.) Predominately, the conversations seemed to be two-party and a back and forth exchange. Particularly in the second group, when Travis was being reviewed, he first interacted exclusively with Terrance, which concluded with Terrance giving a “summative” comment, and then Kai started engaging his comments with Travis. The turn taking itself was most commonly a back and forth between two speakers. For example:

Travis: Ok. (Reading written comments) So when you say here at the beginning that these examples aren't showing visual art, what do you mean by that?
Kai: Um...you could show how, you could make it more clear.
Travis: But I'm trying to say that all art are emotions.
Kai: Ok.
Travis: So make that more clear?
Kai: Yea.
Travis: So that's the kind of thing you're looking for, like a statement that these elements are in visual art so...
Kai: Yea.

This structure was somewhat disrupted and engaged all three parties when a student would ask their group a specific question designed to elicit feedback, for example, in Group 2:

Kai: So what do you think overall?
Travis: I think it's...good. And I don't think it's that repetitive. But I think for your negative role model, when you talk about perception, you need to

talk about that more, because right now, you have it sort of lopsided, where you talk about society, and what they've done, you need to talk about that more. I also think...your conclusion, I guess, sounds more like a summary rather than possibly extending your argument. I think you need to add more. At the very beginning you talk about like, every single one of us, like everyone will, but that's not necessarily true.

Terrence: Yea I agree, that's a little top heavy...

Terrence goes on to give a much more thorough critique; however I wanted to point out here the way in which he engaged initially by echoing Travis' comment. These moments were not as common as the conversation primarily occurring between two parties at once, something that may have been influenced by time, reading and commenting strategy, or perceived etiquette about conversational feedback. The latter two categories are difficult to assign; however, time does seem to have been an influential factor. In the student survey (presented in Chapter 6), students reported having issues with not being able to finish reading and commenting in time, and through analysis of the conversational data, there were several moments in which questions were posed between students and students were unable to answer because they had not read that part yet. That said, it seems likely that students also might have a tendency to "piggy-back" on each others' comments as a way to save time, but also to perhaps build affiliation, cohesion, and agreement amongst the group, especially in cases like the one above, where a student is directly asking for "overall feedback."

4.2.2 Talk Time

Related to turn taking, looking at talk time also revealed some interesting patterns. Predominately, and not surprisingly, the respondents talked more than the writer whose paper was being analyzed. Peer respondents would often give somewhat long comments in response to a particular issue or concern in the paper, whereas the writer would usually give a short response in agreement to their comment. The exchange below embodies a fairly typical exchange:

- Amy: I'm just kind of worried about, like I'm using a lot of "I's" in this thing.
Jake: Yea, but I mean sometimes it helps though, right? You were talking about how like, you, you personally, that you don't believe in stereotypes and then you're like, oh but even I fall into this trap sometimes, like punk rock stereotypes, right?
- Amy: Right.
Jake: But it's just all about education to change people, right? And that ended up being a powerful use of I because your argument was you know that proper education can change opinions, and that's one example where someone did, so that one I wouldn't worry too much about.
- Amy: Ok.

Overall, in both length of talk and frequency of occurrence, the NSs held more talk time than the NNSs. Although once a NS and NNS were engaged in conversation, there was a somewhat equal distribution of turn-taking exchanges, and the length of comments tended to be much longer for the NSs. The longer comments tended to come from students when they were explicitly asked questions from the writer or when they were giving their summative comment, as can be seen in the following example from

- Travis: Do you think I should like, add anything else to my essay?
Kai: Many of your examples are like well known to many, but maybe not everyone. I like how you state your counterargument, you rebut it, and you do that for like every one that you mention. I think it's very good but, the

examples, maybe you should cite some stuff. Like did you get that from...book? Like where did you get that from, other writer?

There were many instances in the data, like the one above, where a comment from a respondent would elicit question asking from the writer, something that often resulted in reciprocal question asking from the respondent as well.

4.2.3 Question Asking

Question asking, as a feedback practice, has been a facet of process-based writing for many decades. The practice of utilizing questions to clarify or elicit idea-generation on the part of the respondent or reader is prominent in draft-development interactions (both written and verbal) as are questions posed on the part of the writer when the opportunity allows (particularly in face-to-face interactions). The practice of question-asking was common in this data set, and varied in question type.

There were minor clarification questions like this one, from Jake to Amy, which was followed with the suggestion to make it more clear, which was quite common in the data set:

Jake: Ok, I just had a quick question here, is this referring to Westfahl?
Amy: Yea.
Jake: Um, yea, cuz like I was just a little confused as to whether it was talking
 about Westfahl or the deceased person.
Amy: Ok.
Jake: Just make it more clear.

And in another example, between Travis and Kai:

Travis: Can I ask you a question? Is your central claim like supposed to be this *(pointing)* or this *(pointing)*?

These types of reader-response based clarification questions were very prevalent in the data, as were questions initiated by the writer to elicit certain types of opinion-based feedback from the respondents, at times even coupled together within the exchanges, like in this one between Kai and Travis:

Kai: You include every element of a complex claim. And the intro is like...very creative. You have a good balance between your argument and your counterargument. The conclusion is...wait. The conclusion is very clear with your claim. But like, I think, some examples are examples are very...different. Like I never heard of it. Like, maybe, I think its ok if you have more common ones.

Travis: Alright.

Kai: I think it would be good if they were well-known. And the body, I think you are getting distracted from reading, maybe you should like, it's not really clear, like you didn't say how it is related to the claim.

Travis: Alright.

Kai: Maybe you should like talk about that they are like, not reading as much as other people, that's why the book is dying.

Travis: What do you think I should do?

Kai: What?

Travis: What other things do you think I should do?

Kai: Like add clear examples of how the book is not dying.

The high occurrence of question-asking in the peer review seems to indicate a collaborative engagement amongst peers (especially in cases where writers posed specific questions to their respondents), but also may be directly influenced by the peer review worksheet, which asks students to specifically look for clarity and highlight areas of confusion. The prevalence of question asking seems to indicate that while often, students were just receptors of their feedback, they also took opportunities to pose questions as a

way to gauge or affirm a particular response in light of assignment expectations. For example, toward the end of Amy's review, in addition to asking her group about the effectiveness of her personal example, she also asked them what they thought of her other examples (evidence), specifically in regard to being "scholarly" enough. In this way, as a tool of affirmation, questions become a way for students to express concerns while also eliciting directed feedback, often engaged with specific aspects of the assignment and goals for the course overall. Question-asking, as discussed in Chapter 3, is a prominent part of Lee's written feedback approach, but also a tool woven throughout the various dynamics of classroom interaction, including larger classroom discussions, where Lee often poses questions to students designed to engage them with expectations and promote and encourage the generation of questions on their behalf as well. While it has been thoroughly discussed that actual participation in this practice was often limited to a select few during class, it was certainly a pervasive practice students were exposed to frequently and constantly in a variety of ways, both written and spoken. Because of this exposure, it can be assumed that students took ownership of this practice, and saw ways to take it up in their peer review interactions, as they had been poised to do so in various facets within and outside of the class each week.

4.2.4 Uptake

The notion of "uptake" is derived from speech act theory and refers to instances where one can see evidence of language being taken from one context and utilized in another. Uptake also makes use of shared understanding and often results in what can be classified as "successful" communication as a result. The notion of uptake is also similar

to the concept of “knowledge transfer” where knowledge is being applied from one context to another. The uptake of language, can then become evidence of the transfer or knowledge. It is therefore of great interest in examination of peer review interactions to see whether or not (and the extent to which) terms, skills, and concepts that students have been instructed on are being extended to their interactions. The idea of uptake can be perceived in many ways, and for this analysis, it became pertinent to examine how the course lexicon influenced student conversations, as well as more generalized patterns of discursive feedback styles they may have adapted from exposure to instructor’s tendencies, and finally, to look for instances of uptake within the context of transferring peer feedback suggestions to subsequent drafts, especially in consideration of the goals of the task, which is to further the development of student writing.

Course Lexicon

Recorded interactions showed high instances of students engaging aspects of the course lexicon, something that was developed through class lessons (“signposting”, for example, on one day I observed), the course outcomes (counterargument, evidence, stakes, analysis, etc.) and reinforced by the peer review worksheet, which included specific reference to: counter argument, central claim, evidence, stakes, and signposting. Each interaction included direct engagement with the course lexicon, as well as was often accompanied by encouragement of the success of particular writing strategies and specific recommendations about how certain skills or ideas could be strengthened through revision.

For example, in the interaction between Amy, Jake, and Matthew, when Amy's paper is being read, she initially states "I'm so nervous", and Jake responds by saying, "Ok right off the bat you start with stakes. I think that's definitely a good way to draw in the reader." While primarily utilizing uptake of a specific outcome-based skill, Jake affirms that Amy is on the right track, and also gives her a reader-based response that might be useful to the assessment of her work. Such a gesture might also have been an effort to reduce some of Amy's nervousness by complimenting her. Later on in the interaction, Jake utilizes uptake once again specifically through the language of "signposting" (a term and strategy Lee had introduced in previous weeks in connection with Outcome 3's expectation of successful academic argumentation as an organizational tool to help guide readers through the logical structure of the argument) as a way to give Amy specific feedback about how to revise her paper:

- Jake: So the main things I would say to focus on are that, you signpost really well in this introduction, um what we like is about who we are, different experiences for different preferences and people arrive at these preferences for many reasons, um, and we start to know a person by understanding their preferences, and you're telling me that you're progressing from what is it...
- Amy: That you can't tell that just based on facts.
- Jake: Yea, and so if you make that a little more apparent to the reader, um that that is the path you're trying to take with this paper...because I found at times, like these signposts kind of blended together, I mean the only thing separating them were the paragraphs, but the arguments within overlapped a little bit.
- Amy: Ok.

Amy as well utilized course lexicon uptake when she was a respondent to Matthew's paper. At one point she asked him a question about his "examples" to which he responded "what?" and she corrected herself by saying "or evidence." While it could

be that Matthew simply did not hear her, it appears that she interpreted his response as a signal to utilize the course lexicon, rather than what she felt was synonymous. Such a move of linguistic self-correction could indicate a lack of linguistic confidence on the part of Amy, or simply an interest in clarification toward the specific goals of the task (which were very much guided by engagement with the language used in the Peer Review worksheet) “Signposting,” a term specifically pointed to on the worksheet, was brought up several times, again by Jack in specific reference to Matthew foreshadowing the organization of his paper better. Jake also explained to Matthew how he felt that his paper was lacking sufficient discussion of counterarguments, to which Matthew responded, “Yea, that’s what I was worried about.” In response, Jake actually summarizes Matthew’s argument and goes on to explain what a counterargument is, and Amy gets involved by giving a specific suggestion about where and how to include it.

- Jake: It’s claiming why video games are an art, but it’s not saying like really what another person would think about this, doesn’t really give the other side of the story at all.
- Matthew: Mmmhmm.
- Jake: Which obviously, you wouldn’t want to do too much of, you don’t want to take away from your claim at all, but the fact that it’s all one-sided, I think it would be better to at least address what other people would say, like address the counterargument, and then say why the counterargument doesn’t hold true. I’m trying to think of an example...
- Amy: Yea, I read the first one and was like, you’re claiming that people make video games to make money, right?
- Jake: Right.
- Amy: Ok, and like what you incorporate here is like, in the first section, you’re saying that but what he would say is that this is just for the game to include more players. Maybe I’m just saying you could...because he is arguing against it.
- Matthew: Yea, I know, I feel like I should have more counterargument.

The course lexicon uptake continued later on in the interaction as well, when Matthew also recognized his need to include stakes in his paper, and mentioned to Amy: “Yea, I realized, actually from reading your paper, that I didn’t put any stakes in mine.” In this instance, it was the experience of the collaboration and opportunity to read another student paper that brought to light specific expectations (stakes) that needed to be integrated in Matthew’s paper. Accountability for expectations seemed to be a common way for students to engage in course lexicon uptake, for example when Travis finished reading Kai’s paper and the first thing he said was, “I don’t see any counterargument in your introduction.” Kai then asks him for suggestions of how to do so. Likely facilitated by the peer review worksheet, interactive moments like these suggest students’ engagement with the course expectations in a very intentional way, something that may also have great influence from their instructor, and more specifically, their instructor’s engagement with the course lexicon in both the classroom and directly in feedback. Further, it seems that the worksheet itself had great influence on the way students conversed with one another. This “artifact” had a way of shaping the interactions in a particular way, but students’ ability to engage with the content and questions in a more complex way than simply repeating the language of the worksheet also indicates a certain level of comfort and confidence with the skills they were being asked to engage in. Both the evidence of uptake itself and the ownership students’ took in adapting the concepts for their own purposes speaks to an application of language that demonstrates learning and the transference of knowledge from one context to another (course lessons → writing → instructor feedback → peer feedback). It seems clear from the data that there is indeed

a very dynamic relationship at work between the various ways students are being instructed, and in turn, “instructing” one another.

Instructor Feedback Discursive Style

At the point in the quarter when the first peer review took place, students had already received feedback on two previous papers from Lee and had also received instruction from Lee about how to give each other feedback on the “Peer Review: The Good, Bad, and the Ugly” discussion day, where Lee actually suggested students use some of her written feedback as a model when giving feedback to one another. Therefore, the relationship between the two (instructor and student feedback styles) was of great interest for this study. The findings reveal a strong correlation between the two in many ways, and the areas for further inquiry examined praise vs. criticism and response-based vs. summative comments.

Praise vs. Criticism

Through analysis of Lee’s feedback throughout the quarter, I observed that Lee does use a balance of praise and criticism in her written feedback. Her marginal comments tend to be used for clarification questions, but also to give some response-based praise (although significantly less so). There are often couplings of praise and criticism, where Lee will say something is “good” and then modify it with “but” and provide a piece of criticism. This “sandwiching” technique can also be seen in the end note, where Lee combines praise and criticism, with a heavier focus on criticism, and the praise tending to appear at the beginning and end of the note. Overall, praise probably

accounts for about 10-15% of Lee's feedback given. Similar trends could be viewed during student conversations that took place in peer review, where praise was significantly less common than criticism (or clarification based questions), and the two instances where praise was most frequent would be when writers would specifically ask for what their respondents thought about something, and in the summative comments that often occurred at the end of the interaction. For instance, when Amy asked her group what they thought of her use of examples:

Amy: And what about the examples?

Jake: Oh I think your examples were the best part of the paper, actually. Because you know, you bring something up and then you exemplify it right off the bat. It backed your claim, so...but the doctor one at the end, the only problem I had with it was that it was a full on attack with Westfahl. You kind of went on the full on offensive there.

Amy: Oh, ok.

Jake: So yea, presenting that more as a discussion than a...an attack, I think that would make it a little bit better.

Amy: Ok.

Jake: But other than that, I think examples are really good.

Here, while Jake does give Amy praise (even high praise by saying that the examples were the best part of the paper), he still gives some criticism about one example in particular followed by a revision suggestion, a strategy quite often used by Lee.

Finally, Jake concludes by affirming that the examples are in fact, "good," in this case mimicking the sandwiching technique Lee uses in her end note to students.

Jake took a similar strategy when giving feedback to Matthew, in this case a more summative comment, rather than one initiated by a question:

Jake: Definitely a good paper, ummmm. Like the whole sectioning thing, I actually feel like is some of the best, like as far as organization goes, like hit every element of art. You provided a different example for each, and

you like, kept the attention span going. Every time you hit a bolded topic, you're like, ok, new section. But it could definitely be outlined better in the intro.

Jake goes on to discuss signposting as a way for Matthew to improve his introduction, enacting two strategies Lee employs, giving specific suggestions for revision alongside pieces of criticism and making specific reference to the assignment expectations and course outcomes while doing so. In another instance, Terrence does the same thing while giving feedback to Kai:

Terrance: I think everything is really good, I think the biggest problems are like, paragraphs 2 and 3, where you just, you kind of define celebrity, and talk about celebrities being imperfect, I think you could reduce those or even get rid of them. They seem a little bit unnecessary and they don't really transition very well, I think. It's good background information, but maybe you want to like, change into 2 or 3 sentences and put it into your introduction, make your introduction a little longer. But everything else is really good, your examples are really good.

The word “good” is by far the most commonly used word in relation to feedback, something consistent with Lee’s approach to praise as well. And as can be viewed in the above example, the “good” is often modified, or followed by a specific point of criticism, a very common strategy for Lee in both response-based and summative feedback.

Response-based vs. Summative Comments

Despite the fact that the exposure students had had to Lee’s feedback had only been through written means (their first face-to-face conference occurred the week after), analysis of the data revealed conversational feedback practices that in some ways mimicked those of Lee’s written feedback practices. The relationship between students’

written and verbal responses were difficult to determine because I only had access to the audio recordings, so it might be also presumable that students were using their written comments as a guide to their conversations. Further, it is safe to assume that Lee's approach to feedback is similar in many ways to that of instructors students have been exposed to in the past. Students all reported having experience with peer review prior to this class, and since it was Spring Quarter, students also were likely to have had exposure to a variety of feedback strategies from other instructors that may have impacted their feedback approaches. Overall, it is safe to assume that students had a variety of influence into their collaborative writing feedback practices, although the expectations of this particular activity and these particular interactions are undoubtedly unique and nuanced by numerous variables specific to this environment. Further, the pace and style of the conversations certainly bore a strong resemblance to that of Lee's, where she employs both reader-response based comments in the margin and provides a summative end note that focuses more so on the main areas for revision. During the student interactions, the prominence of reader-based clarification questions were certainly high (as previously discussed) which could indicate an uptake of Lee's feedback style, but also engagement with the peer review worksheet, which specifically asked for students to look for clarity and highlight moments of confusion. The following conversation between Jake and Amy embodies a common interaction in the data:

Jake: Just a little clarification thing, is this your claim, what we like does define who we are?
Amy: Yea.
Jake: Ok, but at like the end of this paragraph, you're like "I do not believe that an obituary is a way to know a person?"

Amy: Yea.
Jake: Um, you know, which is a little bit against your claim in the beginning.
Amy: Oh, because this is one of the examples that the two authors use.
Jake: Right.
Amy: And I'm trying to incorporate it into the conversation, right?
Jake: Right, yea.

This feedback approach is very similar to that of Lee's, where a marginal comment will present a reaction and highlight the specific ways in which it is eliciting confusion in the reader. Later on in the interaction, Amy is able to explain her intentions better to Jake, and he is able to give her more specific advice on how to make that more clear to the reader. Usually, the outcome of these clarification-based response is less confusion, but that is not always the case, like in this example between Travis and Kai, where there is confusion from both about the emphasis of the claim:

Travis: Can I ask you a question? Is your central claim like supposed to be this *(pointing)* or this *(pointing)*?
Kai: Hmmm. *(pauses)* I guess...
Travis: This one?
Kai: I kind of...I'm kind of unclear, I talk about both things.
Travis: Ok, because this one just says...
Kai: Ok, I guess this one.
Travis: Ok.

Presumably, this interaction at least revealed to Kai that there was some confusion about what his claim was which might have then influenced him to realize he was himself confused, and while Travis did not really engage specific revision-based feedback for Kai (as Lee might have), he still provided a reader-response reaction very similar to those that Lee includes in her marginal comments. Several examples have been given already, but there are also very similar feedback strategies that mimic the form and structure of the end note that Lee provides; even in the timing of the interaction, these types of lengthy

summative comments most frequently occur at the end of an interaction, while the response-based tend to occur at the beginning. Below is an example from Travis in response to Terrances' paper:

Terrance: I think that you write really concise, which I think is good, but a good way to like beef up your conclusion and introduction is to become more evaluative, like say these things are really good, they can increase...they can like make people smarter and stuff like that. Yea just talk more about like, how these things can be really beneficial, for people and stuff. Um...let's see. Yea, so you list a lot of examples and I think that's good. Um, I guess you could like describe stuff like the Kindle Fire or classics being free in a little more detail, if you want to add more stuff. Um...but I think it's still pretty good. Yea I think the main thing is just to be a little bit more evaluative, and the transition is good.

The occurrence of both response-based and summative comments aligns with Lee's feedback approach in many ways, with specific patterns like the use of "good," sandwiching criticism with praise, the use of clarification-based questions, and offering of revision suggestions all quite similar to her practices. Further, the attention to content-based higher-order concerns (over lower order grammar based) concerns are consistent with Lee's drafting approach, where content-based issues are the main area of concern for early drafts (no grammar-based comments occurred in this data set). The low level of praise is also consistent with Lee, although she does say she uses her conferences to work on "confidence building" with students, so lack of exposure to that at this point in time may have had some effect, as could time constraints, where the primary goal for students is to complete the task, and acquire the feedback necessary to do so.

Peer Revision Suggestions

The conversations recorded revealed high ratios of content-based feedback that gave both more general and quite specific feedback. For example, it was common for students to tell each other to “make it more clear,” but there were also many occasions where very specific feedback was given, for example from Jake to Matthew:

Jake: Yea, and you mention it in the intro and the conclusion what other people might say about video games but then you don’t address it in your argument. So, I don’t know, possibly finding a place where you could, like it’s the idea that...I mean you say right here that there are plenty of examples that reinforce perverse notions, and so maybe bringing up some of those examples but maybe saying, these don’t address video games as a whole, or these don’t represent video games a whole, these are just things that critics like to point to to say video games aren’t art, right? Um you could say that Call of Duty is mindless shooting, right? Critics might say that it has no moral value behind it, right? But then you could say that Call of Duty by no means represent video games as a whole. Or you could argue for Call of Duty or something like that. And so maybe something like that for a counterargument?”

However, examination of the first submitted drafts (while difficult to know precisely since I did not have access to the rough drafts utilized, written comments given, or filled-in peer review sheets since those were all in paper-form and unsubmitted) often showed that students had not integrated many of the suggestions of their peers. For example, Amy, who had voiced concerns about her use of “I,” particularly in her second paragraph, maintained her use of it in her first draft, but this could have been a conscious choice since her respondents did not reach consensus on whether or not it was appropriate (one affirmed its usage, since she was using a personal example, while the other said he felt it was perhaps less effective and gave the specific suggestion of altering her example

to a more collective opinion held by the general public). Another example is in a paragraph where a student had let Amy know that she was coming off as “too strong” and on the “offense” in relation to critiquing an author she had used, and suggested being more even-handed. While, again, I was not privy to viewing the first draft, the submitted first draft revealed what appeared to me to be a very strong attack on the author, and could indicate a lack of revision on her part. Another suggestion offered to Amy was to utilize the notion of “stereotyping” more prevalently in her paper as a way to tie her examples together. There were specific discussions about where it could be brought up again (in paragraph 2, in addition to 3), yet the submitted paper shows no signs of this. Through the conversation, which primarily occurred between one reviewer and Amy, each suggestion offered was generally met with an “ok” or “right,” and no conversational evidence showed disagreement. Such a finding could indicate that Amy did not value her peers’ advice; however, it could be the parameters of the task that influenced her choice to not integrate peer suggestions in her subsequent draft. Students were not required to submit their rough drafts to Lee, and while it was Lee’s expectation that they would make changes to their drafts based on their peer feedback and their one-on-one conference with her, it is also entirely plausible that Amy submitted her rough draft with either minor changes or none at all as her first draft as well.

When examining Travis’ integration of peer feedback, it was more difficult to track the integration of peer feedback because his partner Kai asked him to include more “common” and “well-known” examples, but no part of the conversation revealed the original examples Travis used and Kai did not provide any specific suggestions. Because

Kai is from Thailand, he may have had a particular lack of familiarity with Travis's examples, which Travis may or may not have chosen to take into account (it was later revealed by Travis that he did not take this advice directly, but reinterpreted and modified it, as will be discussed in more detail in Travis' student profile in Chapter 6). Overall, worth noting in these interactions is that despite the commonality of very specific pieces of feedback, there was little evidence of direct uptake of conversational advice into the subsequent draft.

4.3 First Peer Review Follow-Up With Lee

After the first peer review, Lee and I met to discuss her impressions of how the activity had gone. She acknowledged that it had a bit of a rocky start in part because of a student absence that altered her grouping but also in part because all of her students had reported in the previous class that they had done peer review before, so Lee had falsely assumed they didn't need instruction on the procedure. When she realized that not all students were working on the same paper at the same time, she quickly made an announcement to instruct them and also took the opportunity to remind them of a few things as well (make sure to fill out the peer review sheet and have actual discussions). She didn't feel those issues were too severe, and explained further:

After those sort of hiccups got worked out, I'm happy to say that it sounded to me like the best peer review I've ever had. The comments I was hearing were really productive, students were asking each other really directive questions, in a few groups there were some students who were acting as sort of mediators, saying things like "how did you feel about that?" or do you have anything to add? Sort of making people who weren't talking actually engage and get people to really open up.

She felt that the interactions in particular were what were most successful (in her

observation) and wasn't sure whether it was the questions they had developed, the time they had spent preparing, or just the group dynamics overall, but she described the interactions as "some of the best" she had ever seen. Lee elaborated:

Because of you know, students really engaging each other and asking helpful questions, and another thing that I didn't see last quarter was there wasn't the focusing on sentences, you know the picking apart words, and you know, they were really tearing people down, they were really respectful to one another, they were really good at balancing criticism, and you know, reinforcement, I guess? You know, saying like, this is a really good idea but what if you structured it this way instead?

In this way, Lee made the connection between what students were doing as being quite similar to the way she approaches feedback in her paper, further explaining that she had actually recommended for her students to use her feedback as a model, and based on what she saw, she concluded that it seemed like many of them had, as evidenced in the analysis of the conversations earlier in the chapter as well.

Lee and I also discussed the level of participation and engagement she felt took place, in particular thinking about some of the demographic-based issues that had come up in other activities and aspects of the class. Lee did discuss seeing some of the same types of imbalances at work, and noted it seemed like groups who were not mixed NS/NNS were perceptively more communicative. She also noted that many of the groups were extremely quiet, and it was hard to hear everything going on. However, while Lee did see some of the same "off-balance group dynamics" that occurred in larger group discussions, she observed that "especially the male native speakers dominating conversations, those were also the same students who were asking their silent group members to engage more. Those were the ones who were really acting as effective

mediators.” She talked about the difference in this experience versus in previous quarters where the “dominators” were rude and hurtful whereas these students seemed to be more enthusiastic and engaged.

Lee also observed in some cases students getting slightly off-task at times and talking about topics other than their writing (something that was not present in my own audio recordings of the first peer review, but was in the second peer review, and will be analyzed further as a practice in Chapter 5). In regards to this issue (which is unfortunately limited to what is audible for instructors and researchers alike, as with any pair or group oriented interaction), Lee actually saw off-task talk as a way that some students were building their “peer support network”. She told me about one conversation in particular she had overheard in a group of two NNSs.

Yea it’s nice to see. Like that group of two, and of course they had a tendency to get more off topic than others because they had less things to do, but one of the things I overheard them say was “Oh I think I’ve seen you in my Statistics class.” “Oh, I’ve never seen you, why don’t you say hi? Come sit with me, come talk with me, let’s do homework for that class together.” And it’s nice to see them building those kind of peer support networks.

In response to this observation, Lee told me she planned to encourage her students next to meet with each other outside of class for non-formal peer review sessions if they’ve found people they have a good group dynamic with. She also planned to follow up with her students about their experiences in class (after having a one-on-one conference with Lee where they will discuss how to utilize their peer feedback), something she has modified this quarter as a way to get more investment and engagement from students in the process. She explained:

In previous quarters, I’ve been like ok, we’ll just sort of stick with this model of

peer review and tweak it to make it better, whereas this quarter I'm really interested in giving them more power, especially for the second peer review, um, so I do want to have a sort of open dialogue with them the next time that we meet next Thursday, just sort of asking how they felt about peer review, but then I also want to have them do an anonymous written feedback. Have them discuss how they felt about the peer review, but then also have them essentially brainstorm how they want peer review to work next time.

Although I was unable to attend the follow-up class session, Lee and I did meet that week to discuss what her students reported as their experiences in peer review. Overall, she reported most students had very positive feedback about the experience. They appreciated the worksheet and reported satisfaction with the procedure. One issue that did come up amongst a few students, as Lee reports, was an interest in making the peer review anonymous, as it would make them feel more comfortable sharing their work and giving honest feedback. In our conversation, we discussed how this might work, for example utilizing student numbers instead of names, or somehow setting it up through the course website. Lee recognized that an anonymous peer review would eliminate the possibility of face-to-face conversations, something she finds to be a great benefit, even in recognizing the level of discomfort it brings some students.

After some consideration, Lee decided she would keep the second peer review the same procedure, but would modify the worksheet to suit the second assignment prompt and readjust the groups based on who she thinks would work well together and roughly based on topics (another student recommendation). She did indicate by the end of our conversation, however, that exploring other options of peer review (anonymous, computer-mediated) was something she did have interest in for future classes. In other ways, Lee seemed bolstered by the success of the first peer review, and this seemed to

also impact her decision in maintaining its approach and structure moving toward the second peer review, which will be analyzed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: ECOLOGY OF THE SECOND PEER REVIEW

5.1 Second Peer Review Set-Up

The second peer review took place in the 8th week of the quarter and was focused on the development of Major Paper 2: Pop Culture Analysis. Unlike their first Major Paper, where they were developing a complex claim based on topic or questions that had emerged from the website “Pop Culture Universe,” this time students were free to select any topic of their choosing. In relation to this topical “freedom,” Lee described it as both a “blessing and a curse”. While students struggled with the development of complex claims throughout the quarter, Lee particularly noticed students struggling with “crafting the language for the complex claim” in their drafting of their second Major Papers, and that made complex claims in general, “still stressful for many students.” This “stress” had prompted Lee to do a complex claim workshop where students the week prior the second peer review (in small groups) specifically focused on the revision and development of their isolated complex claims based on peer feedback. In this way, they had experienced sort of a “mini” peer review the week prior to their first full-draft Peer Review. Lee shared with me that students had really seemed to enjoy that and benefit from it (as was later confirmed by students and will be further discussed in Chapter 6), and their anxiety about claim development not only influenced her decision to integrate more lessons leading up to the peer review, but also influenced her decision to make the claim itself a

prominent part of the second peer review worksheet (which she developed based on student feedback as well as her own assessment of what students needed to focus on in this second Major Paper.) Leading up to the second MP, students had written a short Keyword Analysis paper that had focused on selecting a “lens” through which to analyze their particular pop culture text and produced an Annotated Bibliography which required that they add scholarly voices to the conversation in their MPs. In addition to focusing on claim development, the ideas of context and audience awareness had also been important concepts leading up to this paper and the peer review activity (which had been emphasized in the topic “bidding” activity).

On the day prior to the peer review, like the first, students had been asked to bring several printed copies of their draft and Lee would organize their groups (this time based on topic). On the day of they had written the preassigned groups on the board, and instructed students as they arrived to move to sit in their assigned groups. As students were getting into groups, Lee passed around copies of the peer review worksheet and also passed out chips and cookies as snacks.

In line with the expectations of the assignment (which asked students to generate a complex claim based on an analysis of a pop culture text of their choosing), and building off of feedback from the last peer review (which highlighted that students wanted to work more on the development of their arguments and specifically, their complex claims), Lee explained that she has changed the worksheet, eliminated a lot of the questions, and had made it more critically focused. She reminded them that they all had said in the anonymous surveys she had given out mid-quarter to gauge feedback on

peer review that students had talked about wanting more critical feedback. She cautioned: “So, being nice isn’t helpful for anyone.”

Students began quietly reading and writing within the first few minutes. After about 20 minutes, Lee made an announcement about how important verbal conversations are in addition to filling out the worksheets, and students begin to chat more with each other. While students are working, Lee remained mostly at the front of the class, occasionally pacing around the room and checking in on groups.

There were 17/21 students present at the start of the peer review, and two students arrived between 20 and 40 minutes late to the class. Lee restrategized at the beginning with the groups and did so again when the late students arrive. Students quickly moved their desks into small groups, where they sat together quite closely, and began to exchange papers. Overall, the groups were audibly quiet and seemed to not be talking much, with the exclusion of one very vocal group (Travis, Miriam, and Terrance). Around each 30-35 minute segment, Lee gave the students warnings about needing to move on to different papers in the group.

Lee gave a ten-minute warning toward the end of class, and at that point, students began to wrap up and have off-task conversations about their majors, classes they shared, and future goals. Overall, students seemed comfortable with the procedure of the task and required little instruction or guidance from Lee, although, from my observation, not all groups were actively engaged in conversation. Many students silently read and wrote comments rather than taking the opportunity to converse. Further, there were some

groups who spoke very quietly at times, almost in a whisper. The energy of the class that day was that students were “on-task” but not engaging in a high level of interactivity.

5.2 Discourse Analysis of the Second Peer Review

To gain a clearer picture of the types of interactions that were occurring between students, I recorded student conversations between 2 peer review groups:

Group 1:

- Amy, 19, a NNS from Hong Kong with high level speaking and writing proficiency and a low level of classroom participation
- Esther, 19, a NNS from China with an intermediate level of speaking and writing proficiency and a low level of classroom participation
- Brian, 19, an English NS with high speaking and writing proficiency and a low level of classroom participation

Group 2:

- Travis, 21, an English NS with very high speaking proficiency, high writing proficiency, and a very high level of classroom participation
- Terrance, 19, an English NS with high levels of speaking and writing proficiency and an intermediate level of classroom participation
- Miriam, a NNS from Pakistan with a high level of speaking and very high level of writing proficiency with a low level of classroom participation

I recorded the groups with audio recorders and later analyzed them for interactional patterns that might give insight into the nature of interactions that were occurring during the second peer review.

As mentioned previously, the procedure of this peer review had remained the same as the first one, so there wasn't an orientation into the activity. The peer review worksheet was modified, and while unfortunately I was unable to attain a copy (the hard copy was misplaced and Lee did not save an electronic version), Lee explained to me that

it had included more critical questions (mainly centralized on the claim and argument), fewer reference to specific course terms, and fewer questions overall.

In the two groups, there was some hesitancy in who would go first. In the first group, Esther nominated herself to go first since she was a little late, and she joked that it could be “punishment.” In the second group, the three played “Rock Paper Scissors” to decide who would go first. In both cases, students broke the ice a bit and initiated some rapport. Another trend worth noting was that the nature of the conversations (particularly at the beginning and at times throughout) often needed to be context-based. Because students could select any pop-culture text they wanted to work with, their topics varied greatly from Sherlock Holmes to Scooby Doo to a reality television show about eating disorders. The lack of familiarity students experienced with the topics did have some bearing on the different categories for analysis (specifically question asking). They would gauge familiarity with their topics by asking their peers if they knew their pop culture texts (which many of them didn’t). Students would have to explain their topics to one another, and they would continue asking context-based questions throughout (related to aspects of a character, arc of a storyline, etc). Context and framing, as was scaffolded through the short assignments and activities leading up to this peer review seemed to have influence on the students insofar as they posed necessary questions for clarification at the start and throughout the peer review.

The same categories of analysis I used for the first review have been maintained for the second peer review for purposes of identifying patterns through comparison, although I was also interested in identifying interactional patterns that were unique to this

data set as well. As such, two additional categories have been added for this data set as relevant categories for analysis: Moves of Self-Deprecation and Metalinguistic and Off-Task Talk.

5.2.1 Turn Taking

Much like in the first peer review, turn taking (or the frequency of speaker exchanges in conversation) had relevancy as a category in the second peer review. Similarly, the conversations that occurred were mostly dominated by two speakers at one time, and the analysis of the transcript revealed that even more so in this data set, the conversation was dominated by the reviewer who spoke up first by giving more reader-response based comments as they read. As such, the turn-taking was set from the beginning of the interaction as one primarily taking place between one reviewer and the writer. This was the case in the Group 1 (Amy, Esther, and Brian), where Esther's paper was reviewed first, and immediately Amy started talking to her about their similarity in topics related to feminism and asking her context-questions related to her topic.

Amy: Is this a movie or a TV show?
Esther: TV Show.
Amy: Are you talking about a specific season?
Esther: I'm talking about the woman slash heroine.
Amy: Right.
Esther: In the last episode.
Amy: Ok.

This type of back and forth turn-taking was consistent throughout most of the interaction, as Amy continued to read on and began to ask clarification questions based on reader response, like in the example below.

Amy: Is this supposed to be “her”?
 Esther: Yea, when Watson wants to sleep with her, oh yea. I kind of missed that.
 Amy: Yea, make that clear.
 Esther: It was my fault. Yea, one of the things I worry about, because then Irene, they aren’t the same person...
 Amy: Yea, it’s kind of confusing.
 Esther: Ok, I’m wondering if I should find another name? Because I don’t know if I should refer to this person as him or her.
 Amy: Yea, it’s confusing. (laughs). But you don’t call girls like “him” or “he.” Like it looks like she has like a split personality.

A similar pattern was observed when examining the Group 2’s interaction, where Miriam immediately started commenting on Travis’ draft, and thus the primary conversation occurred between Miram and Travis throughout with a fairly strong balance in turn-taking.

Miriam: So, is this your claim? (*asking Travis*).
 Travis: Yeeees.
 Miriam: Oh, so is this your signposting?
 Travis: Yea, because it’s like the actual families...
 Miriam: And then the relationships?
 Travis: Well it’s about family-like things, not actual family-family.
 Miriam: Ok.

Both interactions did not include a third voice, something that in Group 1 was highlighted when Esther said to Brian “You’re not saying anything, I’m getting nervous.” He responded by saying, “No, no, I’m just trying to like get my ideas together.” At this point Esther pushes him a bit by engaging conversation, and he responds by giving her feedback.

Esther: Ok, it’s like really not like that deep. I feel like one of the problems is like I spent the whole paper like proving that they’re supporting it, but I don’t think I like pushed...enough.
 Brian: Well I think your strongest part is when you talk about Season 1. I think you have a lot of evidence...background. But here, it’s like not as strong,

when you talk about Watson. In the end it kind of turns out to be about Watson too.

At this point, the conversation did shift to include more of Brian's comments, but a similar situation was observed in other interactions as well, where the majority of conversation was dominated by two speakers. This was also the case when Travis' paper was being reviewed in Group 2, where it was actually Terrance who seemed to recognize his own lack of verbal participation and said after about 20 minutes into the review, "I'm sorry guys, I'm a super slow reader." Miriam responded by saying, "Yea, but you write a lot" suggesting that he was spending a lot of time giving written rather than oral feedback as could be presumed by Miriam speaking to Travis right away (although without video footage, the amount, if at all, she was writing is difficult to conclude). Like Group 1, once the 3rd member (Terrance) did finish reading and writing, there became more of a balance of turn-taking like in the exchange below.

Terrance: Well, first of all, I liked it.
Travis: Yay!
Terrance: I'm just going to tell you this because I think it's actually what your claim is like, one thing I didn't really see is the overall...like why does it matter?
Travis: Yea, yea, the stakes.
Miriam: Yea, I couldn't find them either!
Travis: Oh no! Well I think it was partially because of the changing of the angles at the last minute.
Miriam: You changed it, yea!

Travis then goes on to explain some of the challenges he was having with his paper (specifically related to his claim), and the group talks for a long time about ways he could adapt and narrow his claim. Like in the example above and similar to the first peer

review, toward the end of the interaction is when the most turn-taking occurred between all group members, and when both reviewers were involved, there was a tendency to agree with and “piggy-back” off of the feedback and advice given.

5.2.2 Talk Time

Related to turn-taking, talk-time became a relevant category for analysis, especially in terms of whether it was the writers or readers who were talking most and which members were most participant. In Group 1, Esther and Amy dominated the talk time in all of the interactions, which is presumably related to Brian’s feedback style (which engages more summative rather than reader-response based comments). In Group 2, it was Miriam and Travis who talked the most, and this was likely related to Torrence’s self-identification as a slow reader. Balance of talking time in conversations was also of interest, particularly when thinking back to the first peer review, where it was the reviewers (rather than the writers) and the NSs who tended to have more talk time. In the second data set, this didn’t seem as much to be the case at all. In particular, rather than frequently giving one word responses (as was the case with Amy in the first peer review), there was far more of a rich conversation that took place when feedback was given where questions were being asked on the part of the writers and the reviewers were building off of each others’ ideas, like in the example below for Group 1, when Amy’s paper was being reviewed.

Brian:	Yea, is your main claim that like despite being involved in anorexic behavior, these women are still feminist or that this episode demoralizes fat people?
Amy:	Demoralizes.

Brian: Ok.

Amy: So is there like too many things going on?

Esther: Well, like one of the problems with my paper is that I use the evidence well, but I don't look at like the big thing as a whole, like I feel like I could write about how it is a good example of media promoting social change, and I think you can do that with yours as well, how the show is not, and that's related to a bigger stake, because you said your claim, thesis, was that in that sense its like demoralizing fat people, right?

Amy: Mmhmm. I mean, stake would be that, like media do have the power to influence society but they are like not doing so.

Brian: So maybe you can like, include that in the next draft.

Amy: Yea, when I make that statement I always feel like talking about how like there are constraints of how media can effect society, like was it Booker? Like they have to conform to this demand thingy. So then I feel like I might lose some control focus...

Brian: I feel like your choice of choosing Lisa for this thing, it's like really powerful. There is strong irony in it, like shes this strong feminist character, but not. Do you think that irony could be explored more?

Amy: Ok, so maybe talk about how like some feminists are adopting femininity?

Esther: Mmhmm. So, what is the stake of your paper?

Amy: I don't know, from what I see, with like what is happening, like the way the show is like trying to change the main characters, it's like I don't know, like a big step forward.

In this part of the interaction, all three participants are sharing a fairly equal amount of talk-time, something that became more prevalent toward the end of the interactions, when everyone was ready and prepared to give feedback. The same trend was also observed in Group 2, although overall, Travis (who is a very vocal and dominant speaker in all aspects of the class) had more talk time in terms of length of comments, although not necessarily in frequency (of which he and Miriam were pretty well matched). In the interaction below, Terrance and Miriam are trying to help Travis with his challenging claim, and although Travis does display some moments of frustration, the interaction seems very balanced and collaborative in many ways.

Terrance: Yea, I think it would be better if you were like oh like, Scooby Doo presents these like specific claims...

Travis: I'm not arguing that. I have like one kind of point against it. I don't know if I like...I mean I was just like thinking yea, like what are some things, like if you really wanted to come up with something to be like rawr! Against it, it's like ok, that would be it. Because everything else, it does like actually hold up pretty well, but that's the one thing that's like oh, like the only non-straight relationship is like, they might be friends, but they might be more, and the only way it could be more is because they're like not saying anything that means it isn't, so it's...but, you know.

Miriam: I think you should like pick, one idea from your paper. Pick either family or children and expand on that.

Travis: I know, I know!

Miriam: Because like, I like it! I really like it! I just feel like it...it can get kind of confusing.

Travis: Yea, it's split right now.

Miriam: Yea.

Terrence: Yea, you know one thing you could take a look at is like how does something like this like affect kids? I think it would help if you like narrow the focus of the paper.

Travis: Yea, I need to like, tune that down a little bit.

Terrance: You could talk about the family dynamic.

Travis: Yea, I don't even know if I want to go that way, I might just do like "effects on children" or something.

Miriam: Yea, I think that would be good, like keep most of it, you don't want to throw it away, because its like good. But, stakes, you need to work on your stakes.

In this second peer review, although the pattern maintained that two voices tended to dominate the majority of talk, the voices heard were different than that of those in the first peer review (where NSs tended to have much more talk time). Further, there seemed to be more contributions and self-advocacy on the part of the writers this time around, where in addition to summative comments from reviewers (which were usually the longest sections of conversation) there was also more lengthy commentary originating from the writer's themselves, like in the example with Travis above.

5.2.3 Question Asking

Question asking, which was not only a common conversational feature of the first peer review but also an active part of Lee's feedback practices and classroom culture overall was not surprisingly a heavily prevalent tactic utilized in every interaction that took place in the second peer review for both groups. Each interaction initiated with a number of orienting and contextually-focused questions and then through each interaction, both writers and reviewers utilized question-asking in numerous ways, at times when reviewers posed targeted questions (like where/what is your claim?), clarifying questions (similar to what do you mean by this), and suggestion-based or generative questions (like you could do this or have you considered this) and at the other times when writers posed questions related to what reviewers thought about something, what they meant by something, or how to logistically integrate a particular suggestion. For example, in the exchange below from Amy's review in Group 1: we can see evidence of multiple types of questions being used at once.

Brian: So what is your claim, exactly?
Amy: You mean, is my paper a critique of the show, or?
Brian: Like is it pro or con?
Amy: Well I'm trying to like address both because I do see some positive things, but I think they could like do a lot more besides like criticizing fat women.
Esther: What is your positive side?
Amy: Oh the positive side is like, it kind of like introduces the new aspect of like anorexics are kind of like really struggling as well, which is kind of like a new idea for some people.

Later on in the interaction, when the group is discussing Amy's claim more in-depth, the questions become even more probing and generative.

- Esther: Ok, so then maybe this claim wouldn't work for Frankenstein.
- Amy: Yea, I personally prefer Stitch, because I like Stitch.
- Esther: Yea, but then Frankenstein is like kind of interesting as well because like it doesn't really have a name, and I can see why you would want to compare them. Why do you think the episode's name was Sleeping With The Enemy?
- Amy: Oh, I watched the episode which is focusing on Lisa, and there is this bully called Nelson, and somehow Marge meets Nelson and decides to take him home and like, treats him like a son, which isn't really relevant to the whole Lisa thing. Do you think I should like explain it just so it won't be that confusing?
- Esther: It's ok because like mine matched with the topic I was talking about and if it doesn't, I think that's ok.
- Brian: So is the claim of the paper that like...anorexia is a choice? Or like, since its like psychological kind of, like once you get into the mindset, and you like can't get out, do you really choose it?
- Esther: I'm writing this down, but I feel like talking about it would help as well. So, Lisa is confined by the ideals of being a beautiful woman?
- Amy: Yea.
- Esther: And I feel that's a very strong feminism ideal driven thing and I think it would be more stakes-driven if you included more feminism stuff in it like...
- Amy: Like describing what they would say? Or like describing the power, like how they perceive power like in relation to their body?
- Esther: Yea, and like, in a social level as well, like how this means that woman are giving up their identities to fulfill the pleasure of men.

As these questions progress and the ideas develop, it becomes a highly interactive version of the question-asking students often encounter when they receive feedback from Lee, a seeming opportunity that peer review is offering them. Further, the fact that Amy is asking so many questions could be an indicator of her openness to feedback and engagement in the activity, whereas Travis' lack of question asking in the previous example (in the talk-time section) could indicate a resistance to feedback in some way

(something that will be further illuminated in Chapter 6 where students' experiences are discussed more in depth). Important to note here is that examples like the one above were common throughout the second peer review, where multiple types of questions on the part of reviewers and writers alike were frequently utilized to mobilize conversations and meet the expectations of the task (to receive peer feedback in order to integrate some of it into subsequent drafts).

5.2.4 Uptake

As with the first peer review, I was also interested in analyzing this data set for patterns of uptake interpreted in several ways: examining for students' use of course terms and lexicon in their interactions, the transference (if any) of instructor feedback discursive styles, and evidence of application of peer revision suggestions into subsequent drafts.

Course Lexicon

At this point in the quarter (Week 8), students had been exposed to the course lexicon in various ways for some time. Seeing the ways in which they were "taking up" course lexicon became of interest as a category for analysis because of how it may indicate an engagement with the expectations of the task, but also how it might allow a sense of how students are developing their understanding and comfort with particular writing-based skills that have been taught in the course. Despite not having access to the second peer review worksheet (which did have a significant impact on the nature of conversations in the first peer review) Lee informed me that it was primarily focused on

argument and claim as well as the other expectations of the assignment (including evidence, scholarly sources, and stakes) and obviously built upon practices of “good” writing that had been promoted throughout the quarter (like “signposting,” for example). Further, at this point in the quarter, students had had a lot of exposure to the language of the outcomes and as they were now much closer to the portfolio stage (in which they must demonstrate their fulfillment of these outcomes), so it is also interesting to examine how the language of the outcomes are being taken up specifically (counterargument, for example, in addition to others like “claim” and “evidence”, which are all regularly integrated into the course lexicon).

Analysis of the interactions in both groups revealed a very strong usage of course lexicon (especially in relation to holding other students accountable for them) and a diverse representation of them that indicated students having a comfortable understanding of the function of language in terms of applicability to writing-based skills, specifically argumentation and revision. In the example below, Esther attempts to find out what Amy’s counterargument is, and through their conversation (along with Brian), they bring up aspects of argument, analysis, and use of evidence.

- Esther: Yea, that’s like a really compelling example that I really like because it’s like really directly related to your argument. What was the counterclaim? I thought that the counterclaim was here when you wrote that it could like also be positive, it’s like feminists showing their power, it’s like, if I can control my body.
- Amy: Mmmhmm. I guess my like counterargument is like, it would be that, I guess my main argument would be saying that the consensus doesn’t really do the best, or that they don’t really do the best to address this problem, or just like even, reinforcing the stereotype. But then some might

- argue that because of this attempt, or just like this introduction to this idea, it has still done a pretty good job.
- Brian: Yea, if you include more sources it will be stronger, like mentioning Buffy and the other Sherlock Holmes on the BBC, and that will make it more intertextual too.
- Esther: Um, I don't know, like one thing I noticed is that like you had a lot of summary, yea of like what is going on, but you don't have like much of your like analysis? Or like your own ideas? If you could work on that I think it would be like, stronger as like...a research paper. I'm sorry I'm terrible...but maybe it's because there are like, too many descriptions, it's kind of like very hard to follow at times. A lot of it is like you telling me what's going on with the story rather than like, I don't know like comparing and contrasting them, but at the same time, still talking about themselves. So like...what's your claim? Would it be like...so for right now you have your counterargument like this, so then I thought your claim might be like this, but then I was wondering like where the claim for Frankenstein might be? It's like a little unclear, so maybe you can like focus on like one text rather than like comparing, and that might make it a little shorter, because you don't even have like sources yet.

This gesture of accountability toward the end was in reference to Amy's lack of use of sources (of which they were asked to include 3 for MP2) which she admitted at one point in the interaction she didn't have because she didn't have time (she had written the draft only the night before). A similar issue came up in Travis' group when Miriam observed that Travis didn't have his Works Cited list (something that will be discussed more in the Peer Revision Suggestions section). At another point in Group 2's interaction, Miriam talks to Travis about his "quote-dropping" (a term they had learned from Lee a few weeks prior in a lesson about effective quote integration).

- Miriam: Yea, they just need to be like in the text to be connected to the stuff around them. Yea, yea. You just kind of like "drop" them.
- Travis: I know, I know. It was better to have some that were dropped in than to have none at all.
- Miriam: Yea, I think you talked about it like in the beginning but, like you see how the quotation stuff is at the end, it should be like in the middle.
- Travis: I was used to doing it the other way.

Miriam: Yea, but she said it, I'm 99% sure.
Travis: I'll doublecheck, and then we'll be sure.
Miriam: I'll ask her now.
Travis: Noo! I'm probably wrong.
Miriam: Ok, I won't ask. I don't want you to hate me or something.
Travis: Yea, I'm so hateful. Just constantly bubbling, loathing.
Miriam: Yea, haha.

This part of the interaction was very interesting in terms of how Miriam was trying to give Travis feedback about effective quote integration (to which he admitted he had “dropped” them because he didn’t have time to complete his draft) but they couldn’t agree upon how exactly the quotes should be presented, yet resisted wanting to ask Lee for clarification, despite her being physically nearby. This raises a question about Lee’s role and the stakes of the activity as well, where presumably it is a low-stakes activity where there would be no consequence to checking something with her. But Travis didn’t want to be proven wrong, and Miriam didn’t want to upset Travis when he expressed not wanting to check with her. Although there was a joking nature to this, it does suggest that these students still positioned Lee in an authoritative role that wasn’t desirable in their interaction (despite the fact that not solving the issue could result in negative feedback from her once they submitted their drafts.) Travis’ reluctance to “be wrong” in front of Lee could indicate that he didn’t want to be viewed in a negative light by Lee, and Miriam’s agreement to not ask could indicate that her interest in maintaining a positive affiliation with Travis in the peer review overpowered her interest in figuring out the answer to their question. Moments like this one highlight the “student” aspect of how students position themselves in peer review, even though they are attempting to play the roles of experts in some ways by critiquing each other and holding each other

accountable in the first place. Still being in the “learning” process also came through later on in the same interaction, where Travis’ lack of counterargument was discussed in the group.

- Miriam: Well, also you need to talk about the counterargument in your claim.
Terrence: Well I think it builds up in the counterexample, that you can like use it.
Travis: Yea, cuz like the counterexample is not an example of like how it’s doing these things but, it’s more of an example of like yea, it also does this thing that we don’t like.
Terrance: Yea, because I feel like the counterargument to your paper is like, no it doesn’t represent...
Travis: Yea, like good, grounded morals.
Terrance: Yea, which is like really hard to write, and then counter.
Travis: Yea it’s like hard to disprove the counterargument?
Terrance: Yea, exactly.
Terrance: I mean, it is!

In this instance, the group recognizes the need for better counterargumentation, but also are clearly struggling with actually how to integrate it, so it seems while the use of course terms are prevalent, there is also a difficulty that comes about in terms of application of the actual skill.

Instructor Feedback Discursive Style

Uptake in regards to how instructor feedback discursive style seems to be influencing peer review conversations is another area of analysis that had relevancy in the second peer review. As discussed previously, the technique of question-asking was salient, and while its usage is likely influenced by a number of factors (the nature of task and conversation practices more generally, the expectations of the assignment, the scaffolding that took place leading up to peer review, the way class discussions are

administered, the presence of questions on the peer review worksheet, etc.), it also seems logical that Lee's approach of question-asking in students' written feedback could also influence them, particularly when looking at patterns of clarifying or generative questions which are prominent in Lee's feedback. However, in this section, I will examine the practices of providing praise vs. criticism and reader response-based vs. summative comments, as those were relevant in both the first and second peer review groups in the data set.

Praise Vs. Criticism

As discussed previously, Lee does utilize practices of giving praise and criticism in feedback, while her usage of criticism is much higher than praise. I think it is evidenced by the numerous passages presented in this chapter that students as well were providing high levels of criticism, often coupled with specific pieces of advice about how to make changes to drafts. At times, however, there did seem to be difficulty in translating pieces of criticism into specific revision-oriented advice, like in the case of Travis' peer review. One interesting finding in this data set, though, that stood out from the first peer review is that there was a higher level of praise given overall, and in general, it was more specific and enthusiastic than in the first peer review (for example when Miriam said about Travis' claim, "I like it, I really like it! and when Terrance responded, "First of all, I liked it," and Travis responded "Yay!"). This enthusiastic praise occurred in other moments as well, like in the exchange below between Esther and Amy, when Amy's paper was being reviewed.

Amy: Ok, yea. I mean as a woman, I think it's like really good.
 Esther: Yea. Thank you.
 Amy: Mmmhmm. I still think it's strong and I still like it.
 Esther: I'll put it like...somewhere.
 Amy: I put a smiley face. I like smiley faces. I'm like a kid.
 Esther: No, no. You make this process easier...for me. So thank you.
 Amy: Yay!

Miriam and Travis also shared enthusiastic exchanges of praise in both his and her reviews, as evidenced in the interactions below.

Example 1:

Miriam: Because yours is like controversial and I think it's like really good.
 Travis: Well that's because of the family thing.
 Miriam: Yea, it's like really good! Because of the family thing.

Example 2:

(Reading Miriam's Paper)

Travis: The "madness"
 Miriam: See, I'm like so intense.
 Travis: No I like it. Good "attention-getting" words.

In both of these examples, Miriam and Travis respond positively to very specific aspects of each other's papers, in ways mirroring the type of enthusiastic reader-response based comments Lee sometimes provides. Also, much like Lee's feedback and similar to the first peer review, there was a frequent usage of the word "good" as a descriptor although there were also several instances of communicating "liking" something, which I did not find evidence of in Lee's feedback or in the first peer review. Expressing their opinions more so in this way could be a result of the topics being more personalized, or even in response to some of the expressed anxiety on the part of writers (which will be discussed more in the section about self-deprecating comments) and also indicative of a

world where communicating through emoticons and Emojis across numerous technologies is very commonplace, especially for college-aged students.

The tendency to pair praise with criticism (a common feedback practice for Lee, especially in her end comments) was still a practice that was employed by students throughout the interactions across groups, like in this example, where Brian gives a summative type of comment to Esther.

Brian: Yea, I actually thought the argument was pretty strong. I think the biggest thing for me is that in the conclusion, like at the end of each paragraph, you need to like tie it all in. And so, the three body paragraphs...oh no wait, it is signposted.

Here, he initiates with a piece of praise and follows it up with a piece of criticism that he actually ends up modifying (which could perhaps be because he was somewhat rushed into commenting by Esther when he said he wasn't ready). Nonetheless, the instinct to construct a comment in this way indicates a common feedback practice, one that could indeed be influenced by the way in which Lee administers feedback to their writing as well.

Response-Based vs. Summative Comments

It has already been discussed in several ways throughout this section that students were engaging in both reader-response based feedback and summative feedback throughout the interactions, and the tendency to do one or the other or both seemed to have a relationship to student preferences and general tendencies (such as slow reading). The nature of task also had an impact on these occurrences; for example, when Lee would make a time announcement, students would often go in to “wrap-up mode” where

they would share summative style comments, where reader-response based comments were far more frequent earlier in the interaction and seemingly limited to particular students who preferred doing so (like Travis, Miriam, Amy, and Esther). For example, when Lee announced at around 37 minutes into the first peer review session that they should be moving onto to their second essay, Esther shrieked “Ahhhhh!” and Amy assured her, “don’t worry, I’ll be quick.” Despite the fact that she had been giving a lot of reader-response based feedback, this moment “cued” her into the need to move on to the summative “wrap-up” portion that would allow Esther with some concrete take-aways from the session (a practice which could be influenced by the way Lee provides students with end notes at the closure of their essays that essentially serve the same function.

Amy: Alright, for me, I like your signposting, I think it’s really clear, and I also like your structure with the little subtitles, but again, you need some quotations. Yea, and then there’s some issue with your tense and stuff. Yea, and as I said, I really kind of like how you like mention Irene, but then anyways, just some like clarification to like kind of make it easier for readers to follow through like who you’re referring to so it doesn’t get confusing, but you still get to like, talk about it. And just one thing I like don’t understand is like you said that Watson, like I understand that you said that Watson is, like portraying Watson as a woman is like a really brave act, its novel, its almost like totally new, but then why is it necessary to like, talk about Watson as a female when Watson is a male in the book? And, um...as for like supporting the claim, I like Mrs. Hudson, I just don’t see how it like ties in with the other characters, like with the flow, but I really like the example. And yea, just like narrow it down, and make it clearer with the focus...and so, can you like repeat your claim? Because what I got was like, ok these episodes like really promote gender equality by its innovative portayal of Watson as a female, blah blah blah, so that’s what I have for your claim, but then maybe you can make it like more argumentative instead of like just talking about what’s going on with the show, like sort of incorporating stakes into it...”

Esther: Like...how?

Amy: Like maybe like make it a claim that would make me want to argue with you? (*Laughing*).

Esther: Yea ok so like take it beyond description?
Amy: Yea, but just don't be so gentle, like make it more blunt.
Esther: Ok.

In this final exchange, there are a number of patterns highlighted within it that mirror Lee's feedback practices: the pairing of praise and criticism, the engagement with specific aspects of the content, the use of course terms and language from the assignment and outcomes, generative question-asking, and clear recommendations for a revision. However, what extends this interaction beyond that of what is possible in written feedback (and what was more interactive than in what was seen in the first peer review) is that Esther immediately asks Amy how she can do what Amy is recommending, so while it seems there are "cues" and "gestures" adapted from the discursive practices of instructor feedback, there is also evidence to suggest students are uptaking and adapting these practices in their own ways that also serve the function of the peer review, which allows for more interactivity.

Peer Revision Suggestions

The expectation of integrating peer review suggestions into subsequent drafts is a crucial aspect of the peer review task, and is reinforced in many ways by Lee, who has students fill out a worksheet explaining how they will integrate peer feedback and meet with her one-on-one to discuss this process. Unfortunately, as described in the first peer review analysis, there were some limitations to my ability to fully assess how peer revision suggestions were integrated as I didn't have access to the peer review worksheets or to the rough drafts with comments. I was limited to only looking at what was specifically discussed in conversation. Despite that limitation, I was able to come to

the general conclusion that although many, many very specific suggestions were given, few suggestions were integrated overall. Through examination of the interaction and through further commentary provided in students' Writer's Memos, I was able to gain more insight into why this might be.

In Travis' peer review, for example, Miriam immediately noticed that Travis didn't have his Works Cited list (a requirement for the assignment), and the following interaction occurred:

Miriam: Oh, you don't have your Works Cited?
Travis: I don't.
Miriam: Ok.
Travis: Not on here, but I did turn it in. I didn't want to waste extra paper. I didn't think you guys were going to be interested.
Miriam: I just wanted to see what you used. Yea, and you have like, quotes in random places. It would be a good idea if you explained them better.
Travis: Um, yea, what I realized when I was writing it is like I ended up not doing a family angle at all but then all of my evidence was going that way, so I didn't actually have any sources that were like, good for that, so...
Miriam: I might have some sources for you.
Travis: Awesome, cuz that is one thing I know I'm missing.

Miriam went on to suggest several specific sources for Travis, and even gave him some physical copies she had with her (including Booker and Halberstam, which were course texts). When looking for evidence of uptake later on, I noticed that Travis did not utilize any of the sources Miriam had suggested, nor did he modify his claim in the ways his peers had advised (which is presented in other sections of this chapter). Through his Writer's Memo, I learned that he did not choose to integrate changes because he felt they strayed too far from his own ideas. There was a sense of this resistance felt throughout the interaction, as was his struggle with what he was trying to say, something he

communicated as well in his Writer's Memo (which is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6). Part of what this conclusion allowed me to see was that when students don't integrate changes, they likely have very specific reasons for doing so. It could be logistical (in that they didn't make any changes between their rough and first drafts, which seems entirely plausible given the numerous examples of students struggling with time and lacking required elements of their assignments) but it could also be related to the nature of their own ideas, as was the case of Travis, in which he conscientiously chose to reject his peers' comments. However, in the case of Amy, while I also was not able to recognize any of the verbalized suggestions being integrated into her subsequent draft, in her Writer's Memo to Lee she explained that her draft had been changed drastically between the two drafts, and although she didn't use the specific comments, interacting with Esther had been very helpful for the development of her ideas. These two examples (which will be analyzed further in Chapter 6) give an indication of just how complex the notion of integrating or not integrating peer feedback is, and shows us that multiple factors influence it (be it related to time, student perception, or the ownership of students' ideas). The findings from this peer review also show the ways in which peer review interactions have myriad benefits to students that cannot be fully encapsulated merely by examining for uptake to subsequent drafts, which is why this study has attempted to explore various other salient categories as well.

5.2.5 Self-Deprecating Moves

One unique trend that emerged in this data set was the prevalence of what I have called "self-deprecating moves" or moments when the writers criticize their writing in the

interaction. Both interactions actually began with self-deprecation, with Amy in Group 1 saying “mine is probably the worst” to Esther and then laughing. In Group 2, where Travis’ paper was read first, he gives his peers some direction for his paper, and Miriam takes the opportunity to compare his writing to hers and criticize it in contrast.

Travis: Ok, things to look out for, just if it’s clear, look at my thesis, I guess part of that is can you find my thesis?
Miriam: Thesis looks good!
Travis: Ok.
Miriam: So much better than mine.
Travis: No, no, no.
Miriam: Yea, it is! I’m just saying.
Travis: No, no, no.

Moments like these, where the writers criticized themselves and their peers attempted to reassure them occurred at other moments within the interaction as well, for example toward the middle of Esther’s review.

Esther: Can I clarify anything or is it like so bad, the writing?
Amy: Oh, no. Ok, so this is like the whole claim, and then your central claim would be that? It is...supporting?
Esther: Yea. I mean, I’m trying to focus it on that, but then I’m also including the transgender woman, so I think it more that like they support gender equality.

Here, Esther criticizes herself, Amy quickly dismisses it, and moves on to asking a clarifying question, as Esther had prompted her to. There was also a similar moment (mentioned earlier) where Esther interpreted lack of engagement as potentially negative reactions to her work, when she said to Brian that she was getting “nervous” because he wasn’t saying anything. Esther also apologized at one point for being critical toward Amy, when she said “I’m sorry I’m terrible” alongside her feedback that Amy needed to be more analytical in paper overall. Miriam’s self-deprecating moves also continued

throughout her interactions, for example when she asks Travis about a reference in his paper: “is bad that I haven’t read the book?” and later on, at the start of her peer review, we see a similar type of discourse that occurred at the start of Travis’:

Miriam: It’s terrible, huh?
Travis: It’s not bad!
Miriam: I think it’s terrible. I mean, I don’t think I’m like that bad of a writer, but...
Travis: The only thing so far is I have no experience with this book.

Again, there is an attempt on Travis’ part to reassure her, but he also takes a moment to shift the conversation into an opportunity to set up context for the topic, of which he has no familiarity. These self-deprecating moves really only occurred on the parts of Esther and Miriam, who are both NNSs and generally quiet in class, but were highly interactive and collaborative throughout the interactions as both reviewers and while being reviewed. They also both frequently laughed and made jokes, as was even true in these self-deprecating moments. They both expressed reluctance in having their papers reviewed initially, and Helen only went first because she agreed to as punishment and Miriam rejoiced when she did not “lose” the Rock-Paper-Scissors match that would determine the order of who would be reviewed, and Travis (who had lost) at one point teased her by saying “Oh I guess I decided that we’re doing yours next, haha” to which she protested “No! That’s not fair, I won!” and began laughing. The function of the nature of these interactions seems to be a way to affiliate and express anxiety in some ways, but also help both Esther and Miriam sort of “front-load” their criticism in anticipation of the criticism they expect to receive.

5.2.6 Metalinguistic and Off-Task Talk

Another pattern that emerged in this data set that was reported upon by Lee in the first peer review but not observed in my own analysis was some tendency for Group 1 to engage in metalinguistic (talking about language and the meaning of language) and for both Group 1 and Group 2 to have off-task talk (conversation unrelated to the task at hand, in this case focusing on writing and conversations related to writing). The increase of metalinguistic conversation (while still somewhat minimal overall) made sense given the nature of their second MPs, which allowed for students to select their own pop culture text and utilize a particular keyword of their choosing as an analytical frame, a circumstance which created some knowledge gaps between students, and, as was demonstrated in the previous week (where students “bid” kisses on their topic proposals), there was often a lack of topic/keyword familiarity and a need for contextual explanation/orientation. For example, in Ester’s review, Amy asks her to elaborate a concept further within her text and then she and Esther venture into off-task talk about her ethnicity.

Amy: Can you explain this a little? Like have a glossary that like explains it.
Esther: Ok, yea .
Amy: I wonder if this is like a cultural thing.
Esther: Oh, are you Korean?
Amy: No, in high school, our advisor was Korean, and we wanted to commemorate him and so we always called ourselves kimchi.
Esther: Oh and your last name is...
Amy: Wu. Yea, it’s Chinese.
Esther: Oh, you’re Chinese?
Amy: Yea, do I not look Chinese?
Esther: Haha, I don’t know.

Interestingly, later on in Amy's review, another metalinguistic moment about her topic related to anorexia paved the way for another metalinguistic moment about a specific topic she had used (Cultural Bound Syndrome) and eventually led to another instance of off-task talk about Amy's ethnicity.

- Brian: Um, is anorexia nervosa like a specific kind?
Amy: What do you mean? Like is anorexia nervosa...I think they're the same.
Yea, I just wanted more words. *{Laughs}* Oh, this is recording, dangit.
Brian: Ok, so what is your claim?
Amy: There are debates about it and personally, what I find the most convincing is like that it's a social construction, like everything is a social construction. I don't know if I...I probably removed it from this paper, but do you guys know culturebound disease, do you know this term?
Both Brian and Esther: No.
Amy: So basically it's like within culture, like interestingly, it doesn't really exist within some places, yea its just mainly in Western culture, so yea, it's like a cultural construction, social construction, so that's why the media plays a big role in it, because it like conveys a lot of messages.
Esther: The bound?
Amy: Cultural Bound Syndrome. It's like a technical term or whatever.
Esther: Cultural Bound Syndrome?
Amy: Yea, Cultural Bound Syndrome.
Esther: What does it mean?
Amy: It's just like how in certain places, like the evil eye...
Esther: Oh ok, ok.
Amy: I think I saw one time...wait, where are you from?
Esther: China.
Amy: Oh, ok. I wasn't sure.
Esther: Where are you from?
Amy: Hong Kong
Esther: I did think Korea.
Amy: Yea, that's what my lab partner said, like he thought I was Korean even though I don't look Korean at all, so he was like really confused (laughing).
Esther: Yea.

After this exchange, the group did get back on track. I didn't observe many moments like these in Group 2 but there were a couple of moments that came up in both groups related to the snacks Lee had provided (potato chips and Chips Ahoy chocolate chip cookies). In the first group, when the chips get passed to them (about mid-way in their first interaction) Amy says how hungry she is, and Helen agrees. They begin to eat chips and giggle a bit, and then Helen goes: "Oh, everyone is being so serious, better get back to work." It is interesting here how she seemed to recognize being off-task when comparing their group with their peers and quickly steered her group back on track. In Group 2, Travis and Terrence affiliate over their nostalgia of Chips Ahoy cookies, when Travis says, "Oh my god, Chips Ahoy! I haven't had these since I was a kid", and Terrence replies, "me either." Interesting to note is that Miriam stays silent in this off-task moment, as she is from Pakistan and perhaps she didn't share the same childhood experience. After this brief exchange, the group quickly gets back on task. Interesting to note that in both cases it was an outside artifact (the food) that did briefly derail them, but that mostly both of these groups were largely on task throughout the activity. They didn't engage in off-task talk at the end of their review (as Lee had reported some groups did in the first peer review) perhaps because both Groups 1 and 2 seemed to struggle with time, as each time Lee made an announcement to switch groups they weren't ready and both groups worked on their reviews up until the end of the class that day.

5.3 Second Peer Review Follow-Up With Lee

After the second peer review, Lee and I had a conversation about how she felt the activity went. Aside from the absent students and some students who came later, she said

she felt “pretty good” about how the class went. She said she “overheard some really good peer review feedback, but there were other groups that seemed especially quiet as well.” She felt that some of the group dynamics she had tried to set up might have been thrown off by some of the re-shuffling she had to do.

Lee felt positive about the new peer review sheet she had developed, that with more focus and structure on her part, it actually worked better than the one they had designed together. In regard to the interactive group dynamics, Lee described them as a “mixed bag, as per usual.” She further commented:

Some students were really productive, communicative, and respectful. Other groups were less so on all counts. I tried to balance all groups in regards to gender and native/non-native speakers (also complicated by the latecomers), though I'm unsure of how this concretely affected group dynamics. There didn't seem to be much in the way of conflict, at least.

Overall, she felt the activity was a success, but wished she would have been able to maintain the groups in the way she had set up. From my observation, the session seemed to have been productive for students, as evidenced through my analysis of the conversational interactions as well. However, acquiring a closer perspective of the peer review experience based on direct student feedback was necessary to accompany both mine and Lee's perceptions overall. For this reason, I decided to highlight two students' experiences in the peer review, and enhance them with a broader profile of these students, enriched by their willingness to interview with me outside of class. Further, I administered a focused student-survey to gauge the whole-class response to the peer review experience and analyzed course evaluations to gain a better sense of student

experiences with respect to peer review and other classroom perceptions, findings which will be presented in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER 6: STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE WITH PEER RESPONSE

An ecological perspective on peer response entails not only attempting to make observational conclusions using various forms of data analysis but also an engaging with reported student experiences about the value of peer response in relation to their own personal goals and the goals of the course, something essential when attempting to assess the relationship between these experiences and student success or learning development. Through student interviews, surveys, course evaluations, and instructor reflection, this chapter will present the reported student experiences of peer response in Lee's Spring Quarter class.

6.1 Student Profiles

Midway through the quarter (after the first but before the second peer review) I met with two students separately to discuss their backgrounds and experiences in Lee's class (with a specific emphasis on peer review).

6.1.1 Amy

Background and General Impressions of Lee's Class:

Amy is a college Freshman from Hong Kong who has been in Seattle less than one year. She is a Cantonese 1st Language Speaker, who learned both Mandarin and

English in school. She attended “local” Chinese-medium schools through middle school before eventually going on to an English-medium International High School. She explained to me that in some ways she sees herself as bilingual, but is much more comfortable with Cantonese (or “Canto” as she referred to it), as that is the language she shares with her family and most of her friends. She said even in the U.S., she mostly speaks Cantonese with friends but also does have many acquaintances she speaks English with regularly because she is on a student committee and is kind of “forced to.”

When I asked Amy about why she took this course in particular, she said she knew she had to take an English class, and she really wanted to enroll in a class with her roommate (who is also from Hong Kong and her former high school friend). Further, after doing some research, she felt that English 131 in general sounded more “professional” than the other choices (for example 111, which focuses on literature) and she and her roommate were interested by the pop culture topic they had read about in the course description. For her, the choice to take the class was equally influenced by schedule fit and general interest in the specific class. I also asked Amy about her general impressions of and experiences in the class overall and she said:

It’s pretty good. Lee is awesome. I like...she’s really nice. She wasn’t strict, I mean she isn’t the strict type. And she’s pretty approachable, which I really like. So I mean, she’s not like a big professor, that’s like so hard to approach. I mean, I’m kind of afraid of like, scary professors. And scary TAs, hehe. And it looks like she cares, so that’s good.

She talked about the course content as being somewhat interesting to her, although more so the pop culture texts than the academic articles they had to read. When I asked her specifically what she liked, she said:

Cool videos! *Like How I Met Your Mother* and *Modern Family*, it's like really accessible, and yea, I also like how it like talks about like Pop Culture, and like Lee is really open minded about what we say, so there is a lot of social construction we can talk about.

She also talked about her surprise at the amount of published texts related to feminism, and although she does like talking about feminism, she initially didn't think it had much of a relationship to pop culture. Her final general comment about the class addressed her having some anxiety about the end of the quarter, with how much weight is placed on the portfolio: "Yea. It's just like BOOM! And that's it."

Overall, Amy had very positive feelings toward Lee and the class at the time that we spoke. I asked her to speak about various aspects of the class during our conversation including participation overall and specifically about her experiences with peer review.

Class Participation

Amy described herself as a student who wasn't very participant in the class overall. She said most of the students who participated in class were "loud" and "guys" and that she had actually noticed that not many girls participated in the class. She said she often "daydreams" in class, but also felt like the nature of the conversations (which often had to do with feminism) encourages more males to speak since women "deal with feminism a lot, and a lot of females just agree with what the papers say." She seemed to think of the classroom environment as one where you speak up when you may not agree with what is being said. However, she did discuss another aspect of who tends to speak in class and why, observing that Non-Native Speakers "tend to be quiet," a trend she had noticed in other classes she'd had at VU as well. When I asked her why she thought that

might be, she responded: “Language barrier? Or maybe they feel like their accent is not acceptable? Quote unquote “acceptable” and then laughed.

She also talked about some of the differences between American classrooms and the classrooms she had experienced prior to coming to VU as potentially impacting students in class:

Yea, I know that in some Chinese cultures say that you shouldn’t, like students should be quiet in class, they’re like suppressed. But I also think it’s like the nature of the class, cuz in Hong Kong, the classes are like 40 people. And so if like everyone speaks in discussions, the class wouldn’t go anywhere. So then they just kind of discourage students from speaking. But if you go to International schools, they actually like make you speak.

Even though Amy had herself attended an international school and had experience with the expectation of participation, she also didn’t feel particularly encouraged to speak up in Lee’s class (perhaps because of topic or her “daydreaming”; she never identified her NNS status as being an issue) despite being quite comfortable with most American educational practices, even collaborative writing practices, like peer review.

Previous Experiences With Peer Review:

When we talked about Amy’s previous experiences with peer review, she talked about having done it during high school in Hong Kong, but described it as “sort of like a joke.” She said her teacher would typically assign students into groups, but that “we would all just praise each other because we didn’t like want to say mean stuff.” When I asked her to explain why, she said she didn’t really want to be mean, but also because the teacher was so “chill,” the students didn’t really care (“He didn’t care, we didn’t care”).

Looking back on the experience, Amy saw that it wasn't very useful ("it wasn't very constructive criticisms") and negatively influenced her opinion about peer review overall and in approaching the activity in Lee's class.

Impressions and Experiences with Peer Review in Lee's Class:

When Amy first heard they would be doing peer review in Lee's class, she said her and her roommate "felt pretty negative about it." When I asked why she said she was "kind of like dangit, now we have to talk to people. Cuz in my class I know a few people, like already, like before class started, so I was like dangit, now I have to talk to new people." The fear of interaction in addition to her previous negative experience gave her an initial negative impression, but after experiencing it, she said her group ended up being "pretty good at writing;" she felt like she "got both positive and negative comments and it's like really constructive in terms of like what to keep and what not to keep, how to change your paper, how to like, polish it." She had a positive impression of her group members as well, whom she described as "pretty good at writing" and the "active ones in class" or "the boys who talk a lot" (her partners were Travis and Terrence, two NS males who were highly participant in class). She said she felt like she "got lucky" with her group, and compared her experience with her roommate, who she said had a much less positive experience.

She told me her roommate was paired with two international students who "apparently they only said like how good everything was..." and didn't give her very many suggestions. As a result, Amy had to peer review her roommate's paper for her.

When we talked about why she thought her roommate's peer review didn't go very well, she suggested that maybe her partners didn't like the "feeling of having conflict" or they "just don't like disagreement" and that they might have been hesitant to criticize (which seemed to be a unique experience amongst the International students, but not in her group of Native speakers). When I asked her if she thought this had anything to do with everyone in the group being students as opposed to instructors or "experts", Amy elaborated:

Sometimes there is a hierarchy between students. Like in terms of like how...like just based on their own experiences, some of them are not English Native Speakers or some of them are, or just in terms of like, some of them might be a little more logical or a little more organized than others, so I feel like there is a difference. But it is a good experience to sort of see what others see, just what they say about your paper...

So, while Amy acknowledged the differences between students, she also recognized the benefit in receiving feedback from peers and admitted that some of the nature of her interaction might have been influenced by the fact that her group was with two native speakers. She also said she personally knew one of the members in her roommates' group and described him as "the shy type." Interestingly, while Amy seemed to make some conclusions about the way NNSs interact in class and in groups, she didn't necessarily seem to align herself with this group, despite being a NNS herself.

Overall, Amy described her experience with her first peer review as very positive (we talked between the first and second peer review). I asked her to talk more about the experience in terms of the type of suggestions she received and whether or not she felt like they were valuable to the development of her writing. She said that based on the

feedback, she did try to alter her paper to “make it more clear and more logical and more specific, with examples.” She described herself as someone who was always open to suggestions, saying regardless of who her partners are, she is “always open in the end. Because like their response is really honest. I mean if they say they don’t get it, afterwards, I’m always like oh, what did I do? So there must be some part that I wasn’t clear about.” She said because this class is “not like an ESL class” she assumes that any peer reading her paper has a “pretty good idea of how to read and what to spot, no matter what their level is.”

I also asked Amy to assess herself as a reviewer, whether she would describe herself as a “good peer reviewer,” to which she laughed and said “meh, sort of. I’m not afraid to make negative comments, but sometimes I’m just not as specific. Like I can circle, oh this isn’t clear, but then I wouldn’t say oh, how can you make it better?” She admitted that sometimes she can be a lazy reader and skims through “rather than reading it in detail.” When I asked her why this was, she didn’t suggest time as an issue but rather her own impatience and motivation for the task.

She explained that because students weren’t really being graded there wasn’t a whole lot of motivation, which was her experience in high school and somewhat in Lee’s class as well. She did say she felt that the experience in Lee’s class was more motivating, and part of that had to do with the expectation and group dynamic. She didn’t want to “be the one that accepts everything and gives out nothing, so I just force myself to say something.”

Despite feeling like it was a beneficial experience (and certainly an improvement from her high school experience), she did feel like the activity could be modified to be more successful, namely in the ways students are grouped together. She expressed that she felt like the grouping had been “random” but through surveys, Lee could find out more about what students wanted to work on (organization, flow, grammar, etc.) and divide groups that way, so groups would be tied by student interest.

As a writer, Amy did express value in the experience of collaborating in general, and told me she was a frequent visitor of writing centers. In terms of preferring peer feedback over tutoring feedback (or vice versa), much like peer review, she feels that the writing center is highly variable. She said sometimes the tutors “say things that aren’t useful,” often seemed rushed, and occasionally will just say, “this is good, this is good, bye!” However, she explained that at times, they were “pretty good” and even sometimes “awesome.” What made more positive experiences for Amy, very similar to her experience with peer review, is that she likes it when they provide a balance of positive and negative feedback and also give very specific advice for revising. The specificity of advice is something very key for Amy, despite the fact that she herself admits struggling with it when giving advice to others. Along these lines, we also discussed Amy’s impressions of Lee’s feedback. She told me:

I like her feedback. She’s really specific, like maybe this needs some more clarity, maybe you can approach it this way, blah, blah, blah, or like maybe if you switch gear and use this, like she just like gives us really good suggestions.

She explained further that perhaps why Lee’s feedback is so strong is because she “has lots of experience” and also because she “takes writer’s memos seriously, when I

don't." When I asked her to explain further how she approached Writer's Memos, she laughed and said because it's usually at the end of the paper, she doesn't care quite as much ("I'm like whatever, I'm handing it in lalala!"). However, she also expressed feeling "bad" about this because she recognizes that Lee is being really "genuine" when engaging with feedback, and Amy feels like "it's almost like BSing," despite also admitting that she sees why Lee wants students to do them, she just "doesn't do it" or says what she thinks Lee wants to hear (and acts as though she is treating it seriously). She said she would like to do a better job at planning them in the future though and also suggested that they might have some value when she starts working on the portfolio (which she told me she was very "scared" about). For Amy, much of what motivates her in Lee's class is very connected to what seems to be higher stakes, although she also recognizes the value of certain activities and does have an interest in trying to "match" levels of investment, be it from her instructor or from her peers.

Observations from Amy in Lee's Class and Peer Review:

Over the course of the quarter, I observed Amy in class, recorded her in peer review interactions, tracked the development of her writing, and discussed her student performance with Lee on several occasions. As she herself noted, she was not a very vocal student in class discussions. Outside of group interactions, she very rarely spoke in whole class discussions. She definitely seemed to be listening and engaged, however, and would often take notes. Her writing (according to Lee's assessment) was quite strong from the beginning of the quarter, and despite being a NNS, her English fluency,

especially in writing, was quite high as well. She had high attendance, met deadlines and most expectations, and was very receptive to Lee's feedback in terms of developing her drafts throughout the quarter. Lee described Amy at one point as being very "smart" and also very "determined." Lee's experiences with Amy one-on-one as well as her impressions of her writing gave her very positive impressions of her motivation and investment, despite being a fairly inactive participant in larger group discussions.

When Amy worked in smaller groups, she definitely elevated her participation, although compared to her peers in her first peer review experience, she definitely participated the least in terms of contributing to conversations. Further, her responses to peers were very limited, often just saying "yea" or "ok" when her peers offered suggestions. She did admit that she felt she was often not a very good reviewer and also seemed to position herself against her peers (Jake and Matthew) in some ways (whom she viewed as very "good writers" and described them as the "boys who talk a lot), and may have felt some level of shyness or hesitancy in interacting (as she did express being disappointed at first about peer review because it would "force" her to have to talk to class members). However, she also reported having a positive experience in the first peer review, in fact one that had shifted her perspective about peer review as an activity overall. Although I wasn't able to find direct evidence of uptake in my analysis (which is admittedly limited because I did not have full access to the rough draft or the written comments), Amy herself reported finding value in the activity, especially in the balance of positive and negative feedback she received (which was confirmed in my recording of the interaction), and shared that she did integrate some suggestions in her subsequent

draft. Where Amy felt like there was some faltering was in regards to her reviewing practices, especially in regards to experiencing difficulty in giving specific revision-oriented feedback. This is something that rang true in my own analysis of the conversation as well; even in moments where Amy would point out an area that was causing confusion or seemed to lack a necessary element, she did not provide specific feedback on how it could be improved.

When analyzing the second peer review conversation, it appears to be a very different Amy. This time, her group members were Esther (a NNS from China) and Brian (a local NS). Esther and Brian were reported by Lee (and confirmed through my own observations) to be some of the lowest in terms of classroom participation and overall engagement. Out of the 3, Amy was probably the most highly participant in this group (despite herself not being very active either). Additionally, Esther had been a student early in the quarter who had expressed anxiety about her NNS status to Lee, especially in relation to working with NSs in groups. In the second peer review, though, it was Amy and Esther who dominated the majority of the conversation in quite developed ways. Not only was Amy asking her peers more specific questions, but she was also engaging conversation much more so overall and was giving more revision-focused advice. It is difficult to say of course because I didn't have the opportunity to speak with Amy about her experience in the second peer review, but it seemed like Amy had gained more comfort and confidence in interaction, which could be influenced by having less dominant and potentially intimidating partners (including one NS with lower language fluency than Amy) or by having more comfort with her classmates overall (as the second

peer review took place in Week 8, while during the first peer review in Week 4 most students were still introducing themselves to each other). The observed differences between the first and second peer review could also have much to do with the assignment itself being more interesting and preferential to Amy (as it was an open topic selection), and perhaps by Amy acquiring confidence with course expectations in relation to writing skills based on the success she had been having throughout the quarter. Amy made the decision to include her 2nd Major Paper (which was the focus of the second Peer Review) in her final portfolio, which could be an indication of this being the case (although it should be noted that it is common for students in 100-level composition courses to use their 2nd Major Papers in the portfolios, often because they have more fluency with the writing skills associated with the outcomes, for example complex claims. It could also be the case, of course, that Amy just had a better sense of how to interact in peer review in Lee's classroom setting because she had not only had the experience of doing one already, but also had reflected on that experience through our conversation, which occurred 2 weeks prior to the 2nd peer review.

Overall, the way Amy reported herself in our conversation did align in most ways with my assessment of the first peer review, but much less so with the second. Further, Amy as a group member was far more active and participant overall than she was in discussion, which certainly seems to relate to this level of "accountability" she feels in group interactions, despite describing the activity as somewhat low-stakes and something that takes less priority than higher-stakes activities that are being graded more severely. Another interesting point to note when comparing Amy in the first and second peer

reviews is that when we talked, she said she would have liked to be more strategically paired, perhaps by topic, and in this second peer review, Lee did attempt to group students by topic as best she could. Amy and Esther immediately connected at the beginning of the conversation about the fact that they had both written about topics related to feminism (something Amy shared with me that she enjoyed), and this might have been one reason that they had such a thriving interaction throughout the discussion. Further, they discussed their ethnicities and had some off-task conversations that seemed to demonstrate and likely enhanced their camaraderie and comfort with one another. As I mentioned, when we spoke, Amy seemed to distance herself in many ways from her peers (by gender and level of participation, for example), so given that Esther is also a female NNS who doesn't participate much, there may have been something about that relationship that encouraged Amy to interact more.

In fact, in Amy's Major Paper 2 Writer's Memo, she discussed this directly. She explained that she really wasn't sure how much advice she used from her peer review session because she had basically written a new paper since the peer review session. However, she said it was very helpful because it allowed her "to see the flaws in my first draft and provoked me into thinking more logically and writing more concisely." Furthermore, she commented on the approach to grouping this time and specifically talked about the benefit of topical grouping. She explained:

I also like how peer review groups are assigned by topics this time because Esther, one of the students in my group, gave me concrete suggestions and directions of how my paper can develop because of her own topic and her research experience.

Even though many of the suggestions she was given in the actual peer review didn't make it into Amy's draft, she communicated in the Writer's Memo how it was actually very beneficial in terms of the development of her paper. Given what Amy said when we spoke, it is difficult to assess how "genuine" she is being in her Writer's Memo; however, it could also be argued that our conversation brought about some reflection, particularly when she mentioned she wanted to take them more seriously, did see their value, and recognized a need to "plan" more so that they wouldn't be just rushed at the end. In fact, the inclusion of a Writer's Memo in this draft says a lot about a potential growing investment, because prior to this draft, she did not complete Writer's Memos for all drafts (specifically for her first Major Paper).

In Amy's final portfolio cover letter, where she discusses Outcome 4 (Revision), she talks directly about the benefit of getting "various kinds of feedback" and explains that it is "valuable to writing because having readers who do not know beforehand what I try to communicate read over my paper allows me to know which areas I need clarifications and whether or not I made the right assumption about my readers' knowledge on the subject matter." She also adds that "In addition, having positive feedback helps me gain confidence in my writing skills and my ideas." The balance of both critical and specific feedback, for Amy, is in many ways just as important as the positive feedback she receives, which has an impact on her confidence about both her thinking and writing. In the final reflection portion of her letter, she goes on to thank Lee by "for your careful choice of writing assignments, your constructive comments, your effort to encourage class discussions, and your pep talks! I will definitely miss those." In

this way, she seems to have a holistic appreciation for the various approaches Lee took to help the development of both students' writing and thinking as well as their classroom participation.

Regarding feedback specifically (which seemed to be a very important aspect of this class for Amy), she expressed having difficulty in the "decision-making" required when deciding "whether or not to incorporate certain feedback." Another difficulty Amy expressed is having challenges in "grammatical correctness as English is not my first language." She acknowledged the importance of both receiving feedback and guidance in how to incorporate feedback as an essential component in the writing process.

For Amy, the most valuable take-away from Lee's class (as expressed in her portfolio) was the ability to utilize a "high level of thinking" and the application of previous knowledge (such as from her social science classes), which made her realize that "learning is not only about excelling the class but also constantly practicing in different areas of life." She explained that she is taking from this class the ability to continuously "question the key assumptions in pop culture texts and how the media's representations of people and social issues affect the audience." She concludes that this "higher level of thinking permits me to be a critical thinker and an active learner who constantly asks relative questions." The notion of question-asking, a core component of Lee's course that was manifested in numerous ways (class discussions, her own feedback, and during peer review sessions) seemed to have had a great impact on Amy, especially in regards to articulated "take-away" from the course, something Lee strives for, especially in relation to making connections between students' academic and non-academic lives. The

development of Amy's writing as well as her elevated and more collaborative conversations that occurred in the second peer review certainly seem to indicate an embodiment of many of the curricular goals, despite Amy not always being the most vocal or participant in the class overall.

6.1.2 Travis

Background and General Impressions of Lee's Class:

Travis is a 20 year-old junior at VU originally from a major city in the Pacific Northwest. He is majoring in Communications with a minor in Japanese. He is a Native English speaker and is currently in his 3rd year of Japanese language study at the university. He describes himself as conversationally proficient, but admits his reading is much stronger than his speaking, although he strives to be fluent and tries to speak with Japanese native speakers as much as possible. He describes his own language learning as very "slow progress" and although he thinks communicating in another language is "difficult at times", he really likes it because it forces you to think in different ways and "helps you understand your own language more and your own communication, both in terms of what you're saying and what you're not saying." Studying Japanese, for Travis, has made him "much more conscious of just the kind of things that English, like, implies, versus what seems more straightforward, compared to like Japanese and how they imply things, what they leave out, and it's just really made me speak much more consciously, I think." Overall, Travis has a strong interest in language and language learning, something that he hopes to continue on with throughout his studies and into a career as well.

When I asked Travis about his decision to take Lee's class at this time (which is a bit unusual because typically Freshman take the 100-level composition courses), he explained that he recognized needing the Composition credit required and that it could only be fulfilled through taking a course in the EWP. After viewing many course descriptions online, he eventually chose Lee's course because he is "really interested in pop culture, television, video games, everything like that," and as Travis explained, this class in particular seemed like an opportunity to "tie in" the requirement with "interests I knew I was going to like."

When we talked toward the end of the quarter (just prior to the second peer review), Travis expressed "REALLY" enjoying the class and "all around" having a good experience, which included positive feelings toward the content and the professor generally, but more specifically he talked about liking the articles they had been reading, different texts they had been exploring, and also felt the assignments thus far had been very "straightforward" and allowed him to "develop the skill that we're aiming for".

Travis described himself as a fairly experienced writer, and although he had never taken a composition class like this before, he had taken a Creative Writing class his senior year of high school and earlier in the 2014 school year he had taken a Philosophy course which had him writing more "rhetorical analytic papers", both experiences which had helped him develop as a writer. He said these prior classes got him very familiar with the writing process, and even though he said he hasn't had to "write much in college", he would still describe himself as "pretty solid at writing". However, despite coming into

Lee's class with a "good base", he definitely expressed continuing to learn a lot throughout the course. For example, he shared:

Well, recently I had that "click" moment, where I was like oh! That's what they mean by structure and do it this way so like recently I've been able to like step back and look at my writing a little bit more and like, see, like my organization and stuff... That change sort of started, but then just taking a class that's focused on it right now has just really helped to keep that change going and improve me in those ways I think.

So, despite the fact that Travis was a more experienced student and felt confidence about his writing skills, he felt like he was learning a lot through the class and improving his writing in significant ways. Further, he had an overall positive attitude toward the class and was very enthusiastic about his experience at the time we had talked.

Class Participation

Being actively engaged in the class was something that Travis talked about in a few different ways,; for example when we talked about his level of participation, he described himself as "pretty active" in discussions and in addition to feeling like he always has something to say, he also expressed actually enjoying bringing up different ideas and perspectives, saying:

I like playing devil's advocate. That comes pretty naturally to me. {Laughs} It can be pretty annoying, even to myself at times....But I like being the "yea, but..." guy. So it's like, yea there is this way to see it, but there is also this way to see it....which I feel has value because it brings another viewpoint for people to be talking about and seeing something from.

In this way, Travis seemed to view the discussions he had in class as opportunities to promote critical thinking, not just for himself but for others as well. The relationship between being "active" and "interactive" for Travis seems to be pretty strong, and

actually something he very much enjoyed experiencing, both in larger group and smaller group settings (like peer review), although, as we later discussed, smaller group activities do present different challenges for Travis than do larger group activities.

Previous Experiences With Peer Review:

When we first began to talk about peer review, I asked Travis to talk about his general impressions of it and previous experiences with it. Immediately he said “I have always found it much more useful for me than I feel like I’m able to give back with it...” He discussed having difficulty with giving more “constructive comments” because he finds himself very easily giving the author “the benefit of the doubt” even though he knows in peer review “you’re not supposed to do that.” He admitted a particular difficulty he has in recognizing this is that he can’t seem to find “a happy medium between being super hyper overly critical and just accepting of most things.” When he is being “hyper overly critical,” he has noticed a tendency to “be a nitpick,” for example by “poking at people’s commas,” something he also recognizes is not very helpful as a reviewer. Despite having some issues as a reviewer, Travis did express finding the experience to be very helpful for him, particularly from the perspective of receiving feedback.

The most helpful for Travis, he explained, are how the interactions actually present the opportunity to see your writing through the eyes of someone else, especially in terms of “what aspects are clear versus somewhat not.” He also finds frustration when peers are nitpicky, but ultimately gains a lot regardless because as he explained, “I feel like part of the thing that I like about peer review is getting a bunch of different viewpoints on something instead of just one, so you get to like see, like trends and stuff...” The idea of peer review promoting different points of view and allowing for the

identification of trends across those views was something Travis came to appreciate in his Creative Writing class in high school, where they often did peer review. Although he said it was “sometimes helpful and sometimes not”, he did have mostly positive experiences, especially because they were “many many people” reading your papers, as opposed to just two (like in Lee’s class), which doesn’t allow for as diverse a set of opinions, which Travis really liked in the past. Despite having this frustration with Lee’s peer review (which he admitted likely can’t be modified because of time constraints), Lee’s class has presented him the opportunity not just to attain feedback from his peers but also work on becoming a better reviewer himself. Part of this has been about avoiding “nitpicking” and instead highlighting larger skill areas that need to be improved, and he told me that Lee’s composition course had really been helping him with that, specifically in how to identify what is a “legitimate, good piece of constructive criticism.”

Impressions and Experiences with Peer Review in Lee’s Class:

Throughout our discussion, Travis talked about different aspects of what influences peer review sessions and seems to promote the most productive types of interactions. For him, it was important to have a certain amount of familiarity with the people he’s working with, as it helps him to frame why they might be thinking in a particular way. He talked about this as somewhat being an issue in this composition class (the lack of familiarity), particularly from the idea of him being a Junior and most of his classmates being freshman. He explained that it was “hard” and “weird” to take feedback from someone who “has less experience in writing than you,” and this was something he has been trying to reconcile, especially in an activity like peer review. He explained

further about his first peer review session in Lee's class that even though he "obviously still took their critiques and criticisms as important stuff" there was also "some sort of like weird mental thing" where he kept thinking "I probably have more writing experience than these guys, so, meh!" He said he just had to "get over it" though, especially because he was often able to recognize that his peers had "good points" and that he should "take it seriously."

Travis shared with me other impressions about working with peers, including Non-Native Speakers (of which he had one partner, Kai, from Thailand, in the first peer review). Travis told me he actually really enjoyed working with NNSs and connected back to what he had been saying about what's so interesting to him about learning another language himself, that "it makes you aware of your exact language choices, so like, second language speakers are going to see things in your writing, like multiple interpretations, that you wouldn't see, because you assume like one kind of reading of a sentence with certain emphasis..." This notion connects with what Travis explained being most valuable about peer review, providing the opportunity for different points of view. He also explained that he felt like it was a benefit for him to work with NNSs, but perhaps it might be frustrating for them, particularly from a structural language standpoint, where they might be wanting that kind of feedback (related to grammar, for example), but their NS peer may not be able to provide it to them because as he explained, NSs are often "blind" to those kind of aspects of their language. Overall, he described the experience of working with NSs as a "strength" and an "asset," provided "they're at a level where they've mastered the language."

When I asked him to talk about whether or not he felt like he could successfully advise his NNS peers, he admitted it was somewhat challenging because of the “desire to do the nit-picky pieces,” but that ultimately he didn’t see it as more challenging than working with NSs because in some ways NNS writing makes “problems more clear” and that he finds himself paying more attention and analyzing more for this reason, which ultimately promotes a stronger review. For Travis, the level of experience he perceived from his peers influenced him more so than their language background, something that actually enhanced his perception of their feedback.

Travis and I further discussed his perception of peer feedback in relation to how much of it he actually takes into account and integrates into his subsequent drafts. Overall, he said he takes about 50% of them into account, and for him, it depends greatly on the type of feedback they’re giving. For example, if it’s a comment related to “assignment specifics”, for Travis, that would be an “instant in” but other types of comments he will give more scrutiny too. For example, he talked about the first peer review where Kai had asked him to include more examples but when he went back to work on the draft, he didn’t feel like he needed more examples. He felt the examples he had included needed better signposting so he could show “how this thing related specifically to a term that I was using to make it important.” He said that was one really interesting moment in peer feedback assessment where he “realized oh, ok, don’t look at just like literally what they’re saying, look at like, the context behind it and like, another way to potentially address that.” So for Travis, each piece of feedback he receives needs

to be carefully considered, and it doesn't seem to be as much about who is giving the feedback, but actually the piece of feedback itself.

Travis explained that he is much less receptive to feedback about the “little things you don't really need to worry about.” For him, it's about the “big things” which are generally those that relate to the expectations of the assignment or are tied into “getting another viewpoint on like how your writing is interpreted by someone else”. He explained that he is very confident in his own ideas, and thus isn't very open to conceptual feedback from peers, but things related to structure (for example, signposting, organization, etc.) are areas he would be receptive to in terms of making changes based on peer feedback. His goal in revision-based collaboration is not about changing his ideas, but rather getting them across more clearly if need be. He described himself in this way:

Yea, and I feel like that's just part of the kind of writer that I am. I...I have my ideas, but just expressing them can sometimes be the more challenging part. Because I am very in my head a lot of the time, and it's very easy for me to make logical leaps that are perfectly logical to me, but to someone else, it's like what are you talking about here? I don't understand how this is relevant.

Again, this idea connects to what Travis seems to find so valuable in peer interactions, the ability to get multiple viewpoints and various perspectives on his writing that he himself is unable to provide. This notion of “multiple viewpoints” also comes up for Travis in his own writing process, where he frequently seeks out examples of similar types of writing or writing related to his specific topics as a way to generate his own ideas. Before he starts writing, he seeks out reading to see “what kinds of ideas other people are writing about prioritizing.” He then returns to examples once he's finished to

“check it and check it again.” Throughout the writing process, he actively uses examples as way to help him explain concepts and he is especially attuned to how they “make clear to an uninitiated audience some of the more difficult parts of their topic.” In this way, Travis sort of conducts a self-initiated peer review even prior to his own writing. Revision-based collaboration, for Travis, is definitely about perception and comparison, which he admits writers are unable to do on their own.

Travis sees feedback as crucial for writing development as well, and although he admits having some hesitation in integrating peer feedback, on the other hand, he is very receptive to integrating instructor feedback, which he estimates at between 95% and 100%. In explaining, he pointed to, not surprisingly, grading authority but also to experience and expertise (“instructors have also had a lot more time working with this type of thing so they are more aware of that”). He pointed specifically to the practice of using “leading questions” as really helpful for him, ones that are designed to help him consider something from a different perspective. He talked about his last paper where Lee had done this, and Travis explained how that method helped “summarize a really important point of my paper.” He talked about how in that case, Lee was able to see something that he couldn’t see, but then realized it was connected to what he was trying to write so as a result, Travis told me:

I was able to restructure things around this idea that Lee got from my paper, so sort of synthesize it. Synthesize it with what I was trying to do with what Lee perceived, because if someone reading my paper is going to perceive it, than I might as well try to meet you half way.

In this way, there seems to be both a recognition of a power in interpretation (and a responsibility in clarity, as he described earlier) but also an opportunity for the development of ideas through collaboration, something Travis seeks out in all writing-based interactions but is clearly more open to through instructor-based feedback rather than peers.

At the end of our conversation, I asked Travis to share with me any suggestions he had for how peer review could be improved in Lee's class. Not surprisingly, he wanted for the groups to be bigger, maybe 4 or 5 people. He explained that with only 2 partners, it was difficult to see if there are trends in the feedback, and just in general, he would like more voices. He again talked about his creative writing class in high school, where everyone would read everyone's work and there would be an entire group discussion about each writer. Although he really enjoyed that type of experience, he admitted that it was probably "much much much more intimate than I think we can do..." but that there is also a "happy medium" between the two approaches, and with just adding a few more people, students would be able to get "more opinions, so you feel like you're able to have more things to work off of, and more ways to change."

Observations from Travis in Lee's Class and Peer Review:

As with Amy, I observed Travis in many facets throughout Lee's class: how he behaved during classes, through his peer review sessions, his writing development, and through conversations with Lee about how she perceived him as a student. Travis was indeed a very active student in Lee's class in every capacity. His voice was frequently heard and expressed. On most days I observed, he spoke numerous times and offered a

range of commentary, at times relating to assigned texts, other times he would bring up his own ideas or draw upon his experiences or pop culture texts he felt related to the conversation. He certainly engaged the role of “the devil’s advocate” as he described and often posed alternative points of view, especially through questions. At times, this would engage other students, but there were many moments when it seemed the conversation was occurring only between Lee and Travis. Lee and I talked about him often because he was such a dominant voice in the class; however, his dominance was never about shutting students down (or intended to be); it seemed to be about his own enthusiasm as a student and for the content of the course. His writing was actually not the strongest in the class, and Lee explained to me that he did at times seem to struggle with receiving and actually applying feedback. She explained at one point toward the end of the quarter that she felt he had “started the class with the attitude of “I don't need this class but it's gonna be fun and I'm excited” and by the time we got into the second sequence, he was very humbled about his writing and willing to actually *do* something about it.”

Unlike Amy, Travis was a very vocal participant in both of his peer review sessions. His first group had two males, a NNS (Kai) and a NS (Terrance), and his second group included one female NNS (Miriam from Pakistan) and one male NS (Terrance once again). There was a richer and more collaborative nature to the second peer review, especially between Travis and Miriam. Despite Terrance and Travis both being more active members of class and being put in the same group twice, there was not a high level of conversational activity between the two of them in the group. In terms of the type of advice Travis tended to give in conversation, he did occasionally focus on the “nit-picky”

elements as he feared (like some of Miriam's specific word choices and proper MLA format), but also did attempt to give feedback based on clarity and posing alternative points of view. He also engaged question-asking quite frequently, a practice he had pointed to as particularly helpful in the feedback he had received from Lee. Interestingly, the moment he recounted to me in our interview about not integrating Kai's suggestion to add more examples and instead reinterpret it to modify the signposting in his paper held some significance in the development of his writing. I initially concluded that his not adding more examples as Kai suggested may have been related to Travis interpreting Kai's lack of cultural reference or maybe that he just didn't have time to address that point in his subsequent revision. However, through our discussion and analysis of his final portfolio, I am now able to see that Travis was very deliberate about not taking that specific piece of advice; he seems to have considered it deeply and ultimately reframed it in a way that felt successful to him while still maintaining the integrity of his own ideas (as he saw them).

He decided to include his first Major Paper (from the first peer review) in his final portfolio, and in his reflection cover letter, he explained how he had made changes to the piece specifically based on both peer and instructor feedback.

He explained the nature of the comments he responded to in this way:

Peer comments were about framing my evidence as being relevant to my argument, though they had been phrased as wanting more evidence, what I needed to do was instead provide context.

In this way, the peer feedback became a vehicle for the revision, which he still maintained ownership of, an encapsulation very much of the way Travis describes himself as a writer, one who is unwilling to change his ideas, but one that very much wants to convey his ideas clearly to his audience (of which his peers are very much a part). In Travis' second peer review, he was highly interactive with his peers, and actually his review portion took up the longest amount of time. Immediately he and Miriam started talking about his missing Works Cited list and Miriam offered a number of suggestions about sources he could include in the development of his paper. Much of the conversation then shifted to confusion about Travis' claim, which he admitted he was really struggling with. Upon analysis of the subsequent draft, it was revealed that Travis didn't integrate his peers' suggestions, particularly by including any of the sources Miriam recommended or by simplifying his claim in the ways Terrance and Miriam advised. Again, there could be a conclusion made about his perception of his peers, a rejection of "changing" his ideas, or even just that he simply didn't have time to produce a revision that addressed the issues raised. But, it is actually in his Writer's Memo to Lee that I learned much more. At the beginning of the memo, he explains that he knows his claim is "convoluted" and "confusing" but in order for him to change it in the way that would be more logical, he would have to modify it to be something that he simply did not believe. He further explains that he understands a need to see the text in a new way, and he didn't realize until too far into the writing process that that was something he wasn't prepared to do. He also expresses to Lee that he wishes he would have just "picked a text

that he hated.” This memo ends up being quite a defense of what he has written, and becomes most interesting when he explains the struggle with his peer feedback:

So in revising my piece, I was stymied. The feedback I got from my peers wanted me to restructure my piece in ways I didn’t really feel were honest to what I was trying to write. I did try to include better connecting points around necessary quotes so they felt less dropped in, and more incorporated into the rest of my argument. Another suggestion was that I include quotes from the Halberstam piece in the counter-argument section, which while initially feeling relevant just reminded me of my dislike for that piece.

Despite this happening after I interviewed Travis, this recounting is very consistent with how Travis described his relationship to integrating peer feedback. The “quote-dropping” could be viewed as one that is structural and related to enhancing logical ties through gestures of context. Travis feels these types of suggestions are highly useful, and indeed, it is often difficult to see these issues on your own. But the other points raised, about modifying his claim and utilizing particular sources, ultimately did not remain consistent with Travis’ ideas, so he conscientiously rejected them. Unfortunately, unlike his first piece, he was unable to reconcile the issues in the paper, which is likely why he chose not to include it in his final portfolio.

Travis concludes his note by saying “While I may not be pleased with this piece in how it turned out, I do feel like it taught me a lot about myself as a writer.” He shares that he now understands that he needs to be more critical in his analysis, but for this piece, he just fell short in being able to do so. It could be this moment during the second sequence Lee was referring to when she said he was “humbled”, as especially for such a confident student, writer, and thinker as Travis, it was likely a very difficult and disappointing experience. But, as he said and Lee confirmed, this very much presented an

opportunity for Travis, one he later went on to discuss in his final portfolio cover letter, where he reflected on Outcome 4, which is concerned with revision. He explains:

Knowing how to revise well will allow you to continually improve your work beyond your initial capabilities. By responding to critiques you address your own weaknesses and in doing so, learn how to avoid making them in the future. Being able to take feedback is monumentally important in every setting, so this outcome has applications beyond even the sphere of writing. It forces you to look at your own work from others' points of view and strengthen it. This ability to grow and change is very valuable, especially for students.

Sharing and receiving alternative viewpoints is at the crux of what Travis sees as valuable in learning, and such a perspective certainly extends to the way he orients himself to peer review and peer feedback. There also seems to have been a shift, even from the time we spoke mid-way through the quarter (perhaps very much influenced by his experience writing the second Major Paper), where he didn't feel as confident toward his writing, which may have been jarring for him because of his age, class standing, and experience. In his final reflection to Lee in his portfolio, he expressed that he hesitated in taking the class because his writing "has always been strong", but that he knows his writing is "much stronger" now having gone through the course, and actually he was glad that he waited to take it because it was "nice having a lot of past experiences to build on in this class."

6.2 Student Surveys

To add breadth to the ecology of peer review in Lee's class, particularly in relation to student perspectives toward peer review overall and how it was administered

in this class specifically, an anonymous open-ended student survey was administered at the end of the quarter to students to elicit more feedback about students' attitudes toward peer response after engaging in the activity throughout the quarter.

Table 6.1
Anonymous Open-Ended Student Survey

Question	Coded Responses
1. Do you find peer response helpful? Why or why not? Be specific.	• Helpful (15) • Sort of Helpful (3) • Not Helpful (2)
2. Do you value your peers' suggestions? Why or why not? Be specific.	• Yes (12) • Sometimes, or somewhat (8)
3. How often do you use your peers' suggestions in your paper?	• Most of the time or often (9) • Sometimes (8) • All of the time (3)
4. How could peer response be improved? What ideas do you have to make it better? Be specific.	• More time to read, comment, and discuss (5) • More partners (4) • More focus in skills and outcomes (3) • Good the way it is (2) • Fewer partners (2)

	• More directive advice from peers (2) • No response (2) • Make anonymous (2) • More strategic grouping (1)
5. What other kinds of group activities in class will help you with your writing? Be specific.	• Skills based activities (8) • No response (7) • Competition based activities (3) • Good the way it is (2) • Anonymous peer review (1) • Online peer review (1) • Small discussion groups (1) • Speech and presentation based activities (1)

The majority of those who indicated finding peer review helpful pointed to the ability to access and benefit from different perspectives (12) and that comment was often coupled with the recognition that it is difficult to identify problematic issues in your own work, and peer review provides an opportunity for an audience-oriented view (5). For example:

Yes because it's easy to overlook details and connections that the author understands but others might not. It is also helpful b/c I don't like to re-read my papers over and over again, so having someone else read it makes it easier.

I find the peer review sessions helpful because it is important for a writer to have opinions from the readers in order to improve. If there are no peer review, the writing will be flawed as there might be mistakes which I did not see.

Yes because it's always helpful hearing feedback from a different perspective. It is harder to review your own work.

The majority of students in this class, in these comments, seemed to value peer review as it relates to concerns of audience appropriateness, a notion specifically connected to Outcome 1 (which asks students to “demonstrate an ability to write for different audiences” and have a “clear understanding of its audience”) and Outcome 4 (which asks students to “respond to substantive issues raised by the instructor and peers”) (VU EWP Outcomes). Students in this class also clearly responded to expectation of substantive or higher order concerns that promote writing development in specific skill areas. Along those lines, some students also pointed to peer review discussion as giving them the opportunity for clarification (4), claim development, idea generation (2), and/or providing them with specific revision suggestions.

The many references to claim and argument in these responses again indicate a relationship to the outcomes, specifically Outcome 3, which asks students to produce a persuasive argument “taking into consideration counterclaims and multiple points of view as it generates its own perspective and position.” The development of a claim of this nature, for most students in this class, required conversations and feedback from others, something the peer review provided them with. Even the few students who didn't wholeheartedly express finding peer review helpful did recognize the benefit in both clarification and claim development.

Only two student respondents indicated not finding the activity helpful, at least in the way they experienced it in Lee's class.

The idea of peer reviewing is great, but I don't think it's been done to its full potential during class. We get nervous showing our work, and we feel rushed having to make comments on others work. Sometime we end up misinterpreting others work; this is not helpful and greatly affects the author's confidence.

The other comment spoke to the issue of not getting the types of critiques they felt were productive and a tendency of their peers' to be overly "nice" when giving feedback, an issue that is often brought up as a potential pitfall of peer review interactions and perhaps a unique experience of one student influenced by particular group dynamics. Students also were asked about whether or not they value their peers' suggestions during peer review, and all of them indicated that they did either wholly (12) or somewhat (8). Most students provided explanations or in some cases caveats explaining what made the comments valuable from their peers, for example if they were relevant, reasonable, and aligned with the overall goals of the writer (5).

Yes, I value my peers suggestions when I believe they are relevant to my paper.

Usually, if they can supply enough evidence to convince me that I should change something I often will take that into account.

Students also seem to view the task as very much part of the writing process in the sense that the most valuable comments for many of them are those that are both specific and give clear suggestions for revision (5).

Yes, they give me specific feedback like what parts of my essay were clear, what parts were confusing, etc.

Yes if they are specific. I also like if the peer not only criticizes a mistake but also provides solutions to patch the mistake.

Much like in the first questions, students here also expressed finding value in the ability of their peers to provide them with the view of the target audience, give them multiple perspectives, and bring their attention to particular assumptions they may be making about their audience in their writing (5).

Yes because they are almost always part of the audience I am addressing so their insight as to what worked and what didn't are often helpful. Valuable suggestions are comments like what assumptions my claim makes and how to address these concerns.

Students also described their value of feedback that was focused on the topic of eliciting clarification (3) as well as preferring comments focused on content-based issues, rather than grammar.

Yes. I value my peers' suggestions if they are constructive. I value comments about the content of my paper much more than comments about my grammar.

It depends. I value revisions but not editing. Commenting on my analysis is the most important part for me.

Two students described their peers' advice as holistically valuable on the basis of respect and recognition of quality advice. While no respondent indicated not finding anything valuable about their peers' suggestions, the parameters described previously indicate that overall, students do not value comments that seem vague or irrelevant in specific relation to the writer's goals, the assignment expectations, and the course outcomes overall. Students in this class seem to find the most value in peer interaction

when the interaction facilitates the development of their writing in a focused manner, and when their peers are actively engaged.

The reasons students indicated for valuing peer feedback also corresponded with the reasons they gave for how often and why they choose to incorporate their peer feedback in subsequent drafts. Students indicated a high level of utilization of their peers' suggestions overall, with three reporting that they always utilize them, twelve reporting that they utilize them often or most of the time, and the remaining eight reporting that they utilize them some of the time. Relevancy, specificity, manageability, and audience-based issues all came up as reasons why, and overall, most students explained addressing their peers' concerns improved their writing, especially in the goals of adding clarity and appealing their target audiences.

Almost always b/c they are part of the target audience for the major papers so most of the suggestions are good for making my papers clear.”

I use my peer's suggestions unless I really feel that they are irrelevant because their point of view is different than mine so they can add more value to my paper by widening its audience and relatability.

The idea of “improvement” was a common theme in the incentive to respond to peer feedback, and in this way seems to add stakes to the activity and promote investment overall. Many of these students describe a recognition that peer interaction provides them with perspectives about their writing that they cannot give themselves. Throughout the survey responses, the positioning of their peers as “audience” speaks to a relationship with them beyond just that of peers, but perhaps in an elevated role directly tied to expectations of the learning outcomes.

While most of the student surveys gave a relatively positive and constructive view toward Lee's students experiences with peer review, it was also important to elicit their advice about how the activity could be improved in the future, not only for Lee, who engages actively in the process of responsive pedagogical development, but also for this study, to gain a better sense of students' perceptions of their experiences in this activity and promote suggestions for how it might be more productive for them and in future quarters, suggestions that are useful for the understanding and development of the activity across contexts.

Two students didn't respond to this section and two reported having no suggestions for improvement, but the many others that responded provided some very useful insight into possibilities for modification.

The most common suggestion for improvement related to structure and time. Some students talked about wanting more time to read and even suggested reading the essays outside of class before the peer review. Students also touched upon wanting more time to give comments and actually have more thorough face-to-face discussions. On the topic of reducing or increasing the amount of partners, there was some discrepancy. Four students suggested having more partners (in most cases along with more time), as a way to benefit from even more perspectives and advice. Two students suggested having fewer partners, but this was in recognition of the current time constraints. Most students seem to indicate that they do get a lot out of the activity and would gain even more with more time spent.

Other suggestions included having the peer reviews more focused on specific skill development rather than general feedback, for example working on relevant outcomes and having more direction provided to them in terms of what they should discuss with one another. Along those lines, two students expressed a desire for more directive advice from peers, a suggestions consistent with what many students indicated as finding most valuable from peer feedback overall as a contributor to their own writing development.

The last few suggestions related to the nature of how the peer review itself was set up. Two students recommended making the peer review anonymous, something that also came up when students checked in with Lee after the first peer review. While it came up a few times in the survey set as well, as a way for students to potentially feel more comfortable with one another, much of the survey data also indicates a great amount of favor towards the type of face-to-face interactions that non-anonymous peer review allows for as well. In fact, one student suggested that the grouping and pairing be even more strategic than it was this quarter, putting students together on the basis of topic selection and expertise, which is the opposite sentiment of wanting anonymity. The grouping and procedure did seem to be minor issues, though, in comparison to the issue of time constraints and the desire for more focus and direction in the conversations that did occur.

The final question of the survey asked students to mention other types of group activities (presumably other than peer review) that helped with their writing. The most popular response for this question discussed the benefits of skills-based activities (8) and specifically referred to a complex claims workshop that they had done during the quarter

where they worked in small groups to revise each other's complex claims (5).

Interestingly, while not a "traditional" peer review, activities like these would fit in with the suggestion toward more skills-based and directive peer reviews, as they provide students a very focused task and at the same time provide all of the benefits of peer reviews in terms of writing feedback and opportunity for development. The notion of incentive also came up again here where three students suggested their interest in competition-based activities, presumably like Lee had done (the "MLA Olympics" and "Grammar Jeopardy"), but perhaps providing opportunities for the development of other types of similar activities as well.

With a generally high-response rate in the survey (20/21 students), it appears that by the end of the quarter, most of Lee's students had a positive experience with peer review in the class. Although there were many concrete suggestions for improvement (such as more time) and guidelines for optimal interaction (such as the need for specific and directive feedback), the majority of students reported having benefitted from the interactions, utilized the feedback throughout, and felt that their writing was improved as a result. Many of the findings here were also consistent with students' first impressions in many ways, that the highest value of the activity seems to stem from the recognition that peers provide access to multiple viewpoints and perspectives that contribute to the development of ideas and align with the expectations of the course goals overall.

6.3 Course Evaluations

In the final week of Lee's class, her students were given a three part set of course evaluations standardized by the department. There is a component where students rank parts of the course based on a 1-5 system (1 being the lowest score, while 5 is the highest). The other two components are sets of open ended questions, one asking more general questions about student experiences in the class and the other asking more specific questions tailored to the type of activities students experience in introductory level composition courses (discussions, instructor feedback, one-on-one conferences, and peer feedback). The students complete these forms anonymously without the instructor present, and they are processed through the Office of Educational Assessment first before then being returned to the instructor several weeks after the course has completed and the final grades have been submitted.

Overall, the course evaluations for Lee's course were extraordinarily favorable. The numeric portion (based on averages) ranked the course as a whole as 4.8, the course content as 4.9, the instructor's course contributions as 5, and the instructor's effectiveness as 4.9. These scores far exceed the department average (which is 4.2-4.3 for Spring Quarter), and Lee also confirmed that this was her highest scored class to date. Another interesting aspect of the evaluations is the part where the challenge and engagement index (CEI) is calculated. Out of a total of 7 (the highest level), this class was ranked at 5.2, which is also a very high number. Part of this number is calculated through determining the ratio between average of hours spent per week on a course (in this case 9.1) vs which hours were also considered to be valuable in advancing students' education

(in this case 8.3). The close numbers indicate that students, for the most part, felt that what they were doing for the class each week was challenging, relevant, and beneficial to their learning.

A closer analysis of the open-ended sections of the course evaluation reveal equally favorable feedback, and more specific information about what students valued in the course, as well as gave some insight into what they felt could have been improved upon. In answer to the question, “was this class intellectually stimulating? Did it stretch your thinking? Why or why not?”, all 21 respondents (100% response rate) answered “Yes” and went on to give primarily reasons relating to Lee’s class allowing them to see pop culture texts in entirely new and challenging ways, improve skills related to analysis and argumentation, and even gain more confidence in writing. Some students also specifically mentioned Lee’s high expectations and continual support as being particularly motivating for them.

Yes. Writing in itself is already intellectually stimulating but Lee has managed to make that process even better. I find writing intimidating, but Lee tries her best to produce a positive atmosphere that makes the process less frightening, and that has actually helped me think better.

Yes. Lee had high expectations of us and our work b/c she knew we were capable of thinking critically and writing engagingly. She also had thought provoking questions to guide students’ papers.

In addition to students’ referencing specific ways Lee contributed to their learning, but they also described aspects of the class that shaped their ways of thinking and provided them with new learning dispositions or transferable skills.

Yes. This class helped me learn the skills necessary to formulate a persuasive, clear, and focused argument. This class challenged me by making me think outside of the box to come up with new, creative, and innovative ideas.

Yes. I had to think a lot to analyze texts that I was used to just enjoying. I feel like I can get more out of them now now that I see them as ‘texts.’”

Yes. The class was very intellectually stimulating. It opened my eyes to a new way of looking at things – looking at TV shows, songs, films – I would have never even noticed before this class.

Across the board in this class, all Lee’s students did report finding intellectual value in the class, and much of it specifically related to the selection of her course topic. While topic was clearly something students responded positively to, the second question of the evaluation asks students to articulate what parts of the course were especially beneficial by asking, “What aspects of this course contributed most to your learning?”

Students touched upon a number of particular elements of the course they engaged in such, most dominantly, small groupwork/activities/games (10), the instructor’s feedback (4), the specific selection of topics and texts (4), peer review (4), large group discussions (4), one-on-one conferences (3), the opportunity to engage in writing practice (2), the clarity of instruction, and the instructor’s overall contribution to the learning atmosphere (5).

While small groupwork was by far the most contributing element, many students talked specifically (alongside the skills they acquired) about Lee’s contributions to their learning such as her personality, knowledge, and the overall learning atmosphere she was able to create with her enthusiastic and encouraging attitude.

Through Lee’s continual excitement every day, with her motivating words of advice, I was able to truly grow as a writer. I always hear other peers talk about

how having a teacher who is actually excited to teach and is invested in the students' learning and the subject matter makes the experience so much better. Lee goes above and beyond and made the learning process exciting.

I have learned some very concrete skills of writing (conventions; styles; how to develop ideas). I also feel influenced by the happy atmosphere Lee has been creating :). I feel like I can get through writing, there aren't a lot of other things I'll be afraid of.

Positive learning environment from instructor/students, clarity of instruction & examples, tangible activities to engage learning.

Students in Lee's class, through these responses, were able to make connections between their learning the content, skills, and activities they encountered and how the learning environment promoted their success and ability to engage in numerous ways.

The final two questions of this part of the evaluation also asks students to provide examples of elements of the course that distracted from their learning and gave them space to contribute suggestions toward how the class might be improved upon. These questions were less responsive than others as seemingly students had fewer critiques of the course. In the third question, which asks, "what aspects of this class most distracted from your learning?", of the eleven responses, a few students discussed timing and pacing as an issue (either the assignment development, time in which feedback was returned, or the way material was introduced) and one student specifically indicated a desire to read peer review texts beforehand, which would align with a dominant critique in the peer review surveys where many students reported they would like to have more time to engage fully with the activity. The other area a few students commented on were seemingly in relation to the larger group discussions, where there was often an "awkward" silence or that lectures were not as preferential as smaller group activities,

which were more engaging. There were a couple of other comments related to the course textbook (which one student did not find useful) and a specific component of their Major Paper 2 they would have liked more feedback on. Overall, it seems that students had few complaints about the course, other than what has been an observable trend of time constraints and lack of full participation in the large group discussions.

The last question asked students “what suggestions do you have for improving the class?” and while one reported wanting more space/time for peer review, one mentioned quicker feedback turnarounds, one reported wanting a more structured freewriting approach that would lend itself to targeted reflection of their writing experience throughout the quarter, one suggested attempting to “force” students to more actively participate in group discussions and another suggested “less number of boys in this class” (seemingly a commentary on the overly active participation of some very verbal males), overwhelmingly, students here took the opportunity to express that they really enjoyed the class holistically, and provided words of encouragement for Lee.

Don't stop being so awesome! Your continual trying to get the class involved really made a difference, like bringing Hershey kisses. Keep doing things like that. Thanks for such a great quarter!

None, this is a great course that is both academic and fun.

I really can't think of much. I loved this class!

This class was exceptional, even though English isn't my favorite class.

Best English class I've ever taken. Only suggestion is to turn back feedback more quickly. Great class overall.

Not much. Thanks so much, Lee!!!

The class overall was great! Keep doing what you're doing. Stay a rockstar Lee!

None – I loved it :)

Keep on doing what you do!

Keep doing what you're doing!!! :)

These emphatic comments really seem to suggest a recognition and appreciation of the effort on Lee's part, and along with the other reflective components of the evaluations, an ability for students to connect their learning experiences with the effort of their instructor. Two students even took the opportunity to write additional letters to Lee on the back of their evaluations:

Imagining 2 hour English discussion blocks twice a week seemed unbearable in the beginning of the quarter. Lee not only made the class interesting, but the freedom to pursue areas of interest and her enthusiasms kept me attentive and I have noticed large improvements not only in my writing, but formation of ideas as well. Despite being awkward in the beginning, I would encourage her to keep trying to elicit group discussions in class.

Lee,

I want to thank you for everything you've done for our class. I have never met a more caring & passionate instructor in all of my time at the university, AND I AM NOT JUST SAYING THAT! What other professor would go out of their way to have food, candy, & ice cream as prizes?! You are so inspiring, encouraging, and passionate about what you do, Lee. I cannot express enough how thankful I am to have had you as my professor. Hands down the best professor I've ever had!!! So badass!

-Marta"

These efforts from students indicate a strong connection with Lee and the particular ways in which she tried to get the most from her students, something that clearly impacted their perceptions of the class as a whole, and their learning as a part of it.

Much like this second part of the evaluations, the third section also elicited an overwhelming positive response from students when asked to comment on the usefulness of various classroom practices. When asked to comment on the usefulness of “instructor’s classroom discussion of student writing,” students described it as: “Very useful/helpful” (6), “Excellent” (5), “Incredibly helpful/useful” (3), “Helpful/Useful” (2), “Great” (2), “Superb” (1), and “Extraordinary” (1), specifically making mention of its effectiveness in generating ideas, clarifying expectations, fostering confidence, and effectively scaffolding tasks. Only one student had a somewhat negative comment: “I personally felt the example materials were too overwhelming but useful. The fact that I’m an international student may have caused this.” While this student still saw the activity as useful, the comment that the materials were “overwhelming” could speak to either an issue of pacing (as indicated in other parts of the evaluations) or even a content-related barrier, which came up as an issue in the peer review and even group discussions as well.

Similar positive responses were given when students were asked to assess the usefulness of “the instructor’s written comments on student papers”, explaining it was: “Very useful/helpful” (10), “Excellent” (3), “Helpful/Useful” (2), “Great” (3), “Amazing” (1), “Almost Great” (1), and “No Response” (1). Students who elaborated described its usefulness in guiding and shaping their revisions and also commented on its clarity and specificity. The one student who described it as “almost great” said so because of feeling like the feedback return rate was too slow; however, also described it as “worth the wait.” Students in this class very much responded to the high level of feedback Lee

provided them and indicated here finding it very beneficial toward the development of their writing.

“Conferences with instructors” is another area students were asked to give feedback on, and as indicated in other sections of the evaluations, students not surprisingly here also gave very favorable responses. In regards to its usefulness, students described it as: “Very helpful/useful” (9), “Great” (6), “Excellent” (2), “Helpful” (3), and “No Response” (1). Much like instructor feedback, students elaborated here about the effectiveness in guiding their revisions, and also providing opportunities to ask questions and clarify expectations.

Finally, students were asked to comment upon the usefulness of “student response to your writing” which certainly encompasses peer review, but might also include other less formal types of activities and workshops (such as the complex claim workshop). Most students who gave further explanation did cite peer review specifically, and while these responses were also mostly positive, they did give a more varied set of responses, with students explaining it as: “Very helpful/useful” (6), “Most Useful” (1), “Great” (3), “Excellent” (1), “Helpful” (5), “Good” (1), “Pretty good” (2), “Average” (1), and “No Response” (1). A few students commented that the peer reviews were helpful in providing outside perspectives and helping develop their revisions, while many didn’t elaborate further. Those who gave somewhat more critical responses made mention of specific experiences and those more general to what perhaps a peer can offer:

I’d say it’s helpful in general though there was one time when I was with a pretty quiet student that we didn’t get to talk much. Fortunately, there were worksheets for the MPs that helped me get feedback from the quieter students.

Average. It's understandable that peers do not always be able to make right choices about details of your writing.

Pretty good, lots of good suggestions for my revisions, but not always enough evidence.

For the most part, evidenced both here and in the peer review survey I administered, students did find value in their experiences with students' responding to their writing; however, it is not surprising that students express slightly less enthusiasm toward these activities than those that are instructor led. Interestingly, students reported finding the most value from group activities in an earlier part of the survey, but peer review may not be classified in the same way by students, and clearly, it is an activity with a large scale for variance, while instructor practices are more consistent and streamlined, in most cases, especially in regard to feedback, where there is often (and certainly in the case of Lee) a very distinct and targeted approach.

6.3 Final Reflection with Lee

Once the quarter had finished, I met with Lee a final time to discuss her more distanced impressions of her teaching experience with her mixed multilingual/native speaker English 131. Overall, she talked about really enjoying her teaching experience, her particular group of students, and her context. She also expressed enjoying being observed on a regular basis and engaging in the discussions we had because she found that through being asked reflective questions on a regular basis, "it actually really pushed me in terms of my teaching strategies." She admitted that at times my presence in the class made her nervous, but in spite of that, what I had observed in terms of activities,

lesson planning, and dynamics were representative of her typical classes when I was not in attendance.

She observed that in comparison to previous quarters, this particular group was more quiet as a whole, and there was “a more marked divide between the more and less active members of the course.” While she felt she tried numerous ways to encourage participation, she noted still, “I’d really love to find ways to create more level participation.” The idea of “level” was something that Lee had constant concerns with, and further elaborated:

There were some pretty clear divisions along gender and language lines in this class. Mixing it up with peer review assignments helped, but finding a way to break down power dynamics is something I certainly want to work on. I will say, however, that some of the most active students at the end of the class were the ones that began the class with the least confidence and the lowest participation (particularly Esther, who consistently worried about her MLL status).

Lee acknowledged the ways in which both classroom demographics and dynamics impacted the classroom environment, particularly with respect to participation. On this topic, she reflected:

It certainly had an effect on classroom confidence and willingness to engage, especially at the beginning. We found ways to break this down a bit as the quarter progressed, but there was definitely a sense of who felt privileged to speak and who felt unable to. This division seemed largely based on language and writing skills rather than gender and race, but those tensions were felt as well. People were always respectful of one another and many even encouraged each other, but the issue of confidence is certainly an important one. Assigned group work that mixed things up was valuable, but it was difficult to change the dynamics of large group discussions.

Overall, as evidenced in the course evaluations and student comments in numerous facets, Lee's efforts at cultivating student confidence did not go entirely unnoticed or unappreciated, something that could be observed growing throughout the quarter and in both her and students' reflections on their experiences.

CHAPTER 7: IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study, through its variety of analytical approaches, was designed to address a series of research questions related to the overarching question of:

To what extent and how do contextual variables (task design and implementation, discursive practices, reported student attitudes, instructor feedback, material conditions, etc.?) shape types of peer interactions during peer response between linguistically diverse populations in multilingual composition classroom environments?

Ultimately, the findings of this study do affirm the influence of a variety of factors in peer response activities, and the implications of each will be discussed in greater detail throughout this concluding chapter, alongside the discussion of methodological limitations and pedagogical contributions. Through direct engagement with the sub-questions of the study, this chapter is designed to project the impact of this work, particularly when considering the continuation of studies like it in the future and how the findings can inform practices related to peer response activities in multilingual composition classroom environments across U.S. universities nationwide.

7.1 Implications of the Design and Implications of Peer Response Activities

How is the activity of peer response designed and implemented in relation to both course and task goals?

While it has been expressed throughout this study that peer review is a prominent feature of most composition courses, the instantiations of it vary greatly and are largely related to preferences, as well as logistical factors, not to mention heavily informed by past experiences.

For Lee, she developed her approach to peer review during the Fall Quarter of her first year as an instructor in EWP. While peer review is not required of EWP instructors, it is widely prominent (the majority of instructors do them) and one of the reasons is that it directly relates to the expectations of Outcome 4, which asks students to revise their work based on feedback they receive from peers and instructors. Peer Review is a mechanism for peer feedback. Lee's initial approach was quite standard (paper-based, groups of 3-4, student-selected groups, aligned with the Major Papers). After her first experience, she then modified each quarter based on what she had assessed working and not working and was also influenced by student feedback. For example, she made the decision after her Fall Quarter to do strategic grouping and maintained that as a facet to her approach. However, and largely tied to her interest in promoting engagement and investment through student-centeredness, she decided to involve students in the process of design by getting feedback from them prior to the first peer review and in between the first and second peer review. She attained feedback from students in a variety of ways. She used anonymous freewrites, surveys, group discussions, Writer's Memos, and one-on-one conferences to address concerns in real time. Comments in final portfolios and in student evaluations become a means to inform future quarters.

However, logistics certainly play an issue as well, and just like any type of feedback received, Lee had to pick and choose which suggestions from students she would integrate, and ultimately maintained her authority in doing so. For example, she rejected the idea to make the second peer review anonymous partially because she felt that the value of conversation would be lost in the activity. She did, however, decide to group strategically based on topic (as some students suggested), and as Amy reported, this was a change that was viewed favorably. The lack of technology in the classroom prevented Lee from doing computer-mediated peer review, something she expressed at one point having an interest in doing. Thus, it was necessary to utilize a paper-based approach, which did provide some limitations for me in gathering research. Because students had to take with them their papers and feedback for the development of their drafts, I was unable to collect them. However, because Lee set up a one-on-one conference with students after the peer review, she was able to have access to the peer review herself. In retrospect, it would have been very beneficial for me to attend these conferences, but since I had not originally expected there to be such a strong relationship between student conferences with the instructor and peer review, I didn't include this as part of my study in the IRB, and was therefore unable to collect this data.

It is evident the ways in which Lee's design and implementation connected to course goals such as Outcome 4's focus on revision, but there is also an element that relates to Outcome's 1 focus on audience, as Lee sees peer review as an opportunity for students to receive multiple types of feedback (a point which students expressed as a value in multiple ways throughout the quarter as well). In terms of the task goals, much

of what took place was contingent upon a number of moving parts coming together at once. Because Lee sees her role in peer review as primarily one that helps “set it up”, Lee had to integrate lessons and discussions as well as the sort of “nuts and bolts” (which included strategically setting up groups beforehand and compiling the elements of the group generated peer review worksheets, for example). Further, the task goals in many ways were also very dependent upon student accountability (them finishing their drafts, printing them out, showing up to class, and being on time) in addition to engaging in the multiple activities required during the task (reading and commenting on their peers’ drafts, filling in the peer review worksheet, and sharing their feedback verbally) and carrying through the expectations of what was required after the peer review (collecting and summarizing the feedback they had received, filling in their post-worksheet, attending the one-on-one conference with Lee, integrating the selected feedback into their subsequent drafts, and explaining their choices in their Writer’s memos). Because of all of these moving parts, there is somewhat of a high risk of not having all of the course goals met—things which can undoubtedly impact the task itself. For example, late students did indeed disrupt both peer reviews, something that Lee found quite frustrating, especially in the second peer review. However, in spite of a lot of potential for mishap, I would argue that the task in terms of its goals was mostly very consistent and successful, which could be a testament to good design and implementation, or a testament to student engagement and interest overall.

7.2 Implications of the Discursive Patterns of Peer Response Activities

What patterns are revealed through the examination of discursive interactions, specifically linguistic and metalinguistic features in peer response (turn-taking, talk-time, question-asking, uptake, off-task talk, etc.?)

Through analysis of the conversations that took place during the peer reviews, I was able to observe several salient patterns. An important pattern that was consistent across both peer reviews was related to turn-taking, specifically noting that the conversations that occurred between students were typically between two speakers, despite groups having three participants. As I examined this pattern more closely, it did seem to have a relationship to the amount of time students would spend reading. Especially in the second peer review, conversations started occurring immediately between the writer and one reviewer, and what resulted was more reader response based feedback. While a 3rd speaker would occasionally chime in, especially toward the end during the wrap-up, still reading and writing notes or filling in the worksheet at times seemed to pose a barrier to equal participation in the conversation. On one occasion, the lack of engaging in conversation was interpreted by Esther (from) Billie to be perhaps an indicator of her own “bad” writing, when in fact it was simply because Billie had not yet finished reading and didn’t feel ready to share his feedback, even though Amy and Esther had been having a conversation since the beginning of the interaction.

Talk-time was also a relevant category for analysis as in the first peer review, where there was a discrepancy between NS and NNS talk time, in particular; although the frequency of talk was somewhat balanced, the actual amount of talk was far more dominant amongst NSs. This however was not really the case in the second peer review,

where in Amy's group, the majority of the interaction was dominated by talk between Amy and Esther (two NNSs), while Brian (the NS) contributed far less to the conversation, both in frequency and length of speech. There was somewhat more balance in Travis' group in the second peer review, although the talk was mostly dominated by Travis overall and secondly by Miriam (a NNS). Again, talk time seems to have a relationship to the approach to reading and responding, where the students who both read and respond faster have more opportunity to share their comments. Time was also a barrier in some cases when Lee would announce for students to wrap up the paper they were working on, and each respondent would have to give a quick summary. I noticed in these cases often the more "quiet" group member tended to piggy-back upon what was said by the respondent who had been more active during the interaction.

Off-task talk was another category that emerged in the second peer-review, and although it did not appear on the recordings from the first peer review, Lee had also reported hearing some of this during those interactions as well. Some of the off-task talk apparently occurred at the end of some interactions (as students were completed with what they were doing) according to Lee, but in my analysis of the second peer review, I observed that the off-task talk occurred throughout the interactions, and most prominently in the interaction between Esther and Amy, where they talked about their cultural backgrounds and even the food they were eating in class (which was true for Travis' group as well). When Lee and I spoke after the first peer review, she felt that this type of interaction (while, albeit limited) could have some positive indications for rapport-building, and in the second peer review, I agree that this seemed to be the case. Students

seemed more comfortable in general, were laughing and making jokes, and occasionally talked about things unrelated to the task. Overall though, in both peer reviews, students largely stayed on task, so it didn't seem that the off-task talk derailed students in any way. Further, within the category of off-task talk, especially in the second peer review, there were several instances where students had metalinguistic moments, times when they had to ask each other to explain certain words or concepts. It seemed appropriate given the assignment, where students could select a pop culture text of their choosing. As Lee shared early on, one of reasons for selecting her topic of pop culture and this assignment in particular was so that students could be empowered by their own expertise and experience on a topic, and could actually "teach" through their writing. Lee was referring to the ways in which students could teach her, but clearly in the peer review, students were also having to "teach" each other. Naturally, not all of the students were familiar with each other's topics, and even some of the central concepts within them. In this way, these moments somewhat mirrored the lesson Lee had done after the Keyword assignments, where students also had to work to orient their classmates to their topics and keywords, a lesson which generated a lot of discussion, and question-asking practices as well.

Question-asking was perhaps one of the most interesting categories, particularly when thinking about the "culture of question-asking" Lee had seemed to promote and cultivate throughout the course. Arguably, creating "lines of inquiry", as Outcome 3 asks of students, initiates an expectation of question-asking, but Lee constantly pushes the practice in a variety of ways, through discussion, through assignments, through group-

work, through her feedback, through conferences, and it seems plausible that all of those practices also impact students' behaviors in peer review (facilitated by their peer review worksheets which include "critical questions"). However, students also seem to have picked up on this as a useful practice for writing development, as Travis directly described when we spoke, Amy reported in her final cover letter, and was evidenced by the numerous instances question-asking was used both in the first and second peer review.

Another category that was revealed primarily in the second peer review was what I came to identify as "self-deprecating moves" or occasions where students criticized themselves or their writing, often in jest, but also often through the form of questions, where students seemed to need affirmation from their peers that their work wasn't as poor as they thought it was. These moves seemed to relate to their confidence as writers, or could perhaps indicate an overall discomfort with the peer collaboration process (despite it being one that is very low-stakes in relation to grades, it is actually extremely high-stakes in terms of face-threat, where students feel overwhelmed, intimidated, anxious, or shy at the prospect of sharing their work with their peers and actually having to talk to them about it in person). As Amy discussed, there is often a tendency to give overwhelmingly positive feedback because the idea of criticizing each other is uncomfortable for many students. Or, as she concluded about the NNSs her roommate was working with, sometimes shyness can become a factor as well. These moves of deprecation might be a way for students to front-load the criticism in a way that either lessens the blow from their peers or could even be gestures of false-modesty, where often

in social interactions, someone criticizing themselves is immediately met with someone reassuring them through compliments, a pattern that was present in the instances where this took place in the peer review.

A final pattern that emerged when analyzing the discursive practices of students in their peer review interactions was that of uptake, and I decided to interpret it in three different ways. The first was the way I saw the course lexicon (comprised of outcomes, specific assignment expectations, and language Lee had used frequently) impacting the language that student used with one another in their peer review conversations. Especially in the first peer review, students drew upon a number of concepts that were present in the worksheet (such as signposting, evidence, counterargument, stakes, etc.), but did so with ownership and didn't simply use the language put forth from the worksheet. Because I didn't have access to the second worksheet, I can't make the same conclusion about the second peer review exactly, but I did also see a frequent usage of course lexicon (claim, counterargument, and stakes especially) which ties in with what Lee had reported asking students to focus on the second peer review, as it was an area they had struggled with. There was definitely more diversity to the types of topics and terms discussed in the second peer review, which makes sense because of the nature of the assignment (where students had to ask many very specific context-based questions of one another), but could also indicate a growing comfort with making course concepts their own and also a growing comfort with each other overall (in that, they were not as reliant on the worksheet to guide conversation). This seems especially plausible when examining the sort of "wrap up" moments of the interactions where they generally go

through the motions of filling in the worksheets even though they have already had very rich conversations (I saw this at the end of Travis' group in the second peer review where they were joking about putting "conclusion" as the weakest part of Miriam's paper after she had told them that she had to very quickly throw together a conclusion). Regardless, the course lexicon clearly impacted students in both peer reviews; however even with a worksheet that had more questions (as Lee had reported about the first peer review worksheet), students still engaged conversation "guided" by the worksheet, and not dominated by it. But with a more sparse worksheet, a growing comfort with the class and each other, as well as very diverse topics students felt like experts in, there was less prominence of uptake of course lexicon in the second peer review overall, which could be interpreted as less engagement with the task, but actually in my view, seems to indicate a much more rich and collaborative interaction that included more complex thinking as well.

The other two ways I found patterns in uptake related to the relationship between instructor feedback and student feedback practices in peer review, and the relationship between peer review and learner uptake in subsequent drafts, which will be discussed in more depth in the following sections.

7.3 Implications of the Relationship Between Instructor Feedback and Peer Response Activities

What is the relationship between the discourse of instructor feedback and peer response practices?

Lee's approach to feedback was something of interest at the start of this study, in particular the extent to which instructor feedback practices influence how students give

feedback to one another. In some ways, peer review positions students as “proxy” instructors, where they are put in positions to essentially “evaluate” one another’s work. While this might be disputed pedagogically (that instructors aren’t actually asking students to “evaluate” one another, but instead “respond,” a shift which can be observed by the choice in the field in the early 2000s to start referring to peer review as peer response), research has shown that students do often interpret the activity as an evaluative one. I think that conclusion can be drawn in Lee’s class as well, where for example Amy reported how nervous she felt about the idea of doing peer review, and in the second peer review where in both groups students hesitated to have their work read and made self-deprecating comments that indicated they may have feared feeling judged by their peers. The fact that going first was framed as “punishment” in the case of Esther and for the “loser” of the Rock-Paper-Scissors game was very telling. So, yes, I do think that it can be concluded that students internalize the feeling of evaluation and being evaluate, which puts them in a position of instructor “proxy”. However, because they are also working with peers, it becomes more complex. Students like Travis, not surprisingly, reported valuing instructor feedback over peer feedback, and I think it is a safe assumption that most students hold this same view. After all, as Travis pointed out, “they are the ones grading you”, but beyond that, they also are viewed as “experts” and overall, having a lot of experience. Despite students’ preferring instructor feedback, they do also understand the value of their peers, in particular in the ways that they can help them “imagine an audience” (as was discussed in the student survey). However, it seems that while a response or reaction is highly valued in peer interaction, an actual suggestion or piece of

advice is more valued when coming from an instructor or a perceived “expert”, not just a member of the target audience (who is actually unlikely to have expertise in many ways). This tension between “audience” and “expert” represents another element of complexity underlying peer review interactions.

So, given this complexity, where students are in some ways positioned as instructors (but likely have little to no experience acting as instructors) but still are students and view themselves and each other that way, examining how (if at all) instructor feedback practices impacted student feedback practices seemed a very interesting question to pursue. Further, because Lee actually explicitly instructs her students to use her feedback as a model prior to the peer review, it became highly relevant in this particular classroom environment. Throughout the examination of the peer review conversations, I did find what I felt to be a strong indication of uptake of certain instructor feedback practices such as the use of question-asking as a generative practice (as discussed above), the balance of praise and criticism, and the approach of combining response-based alongside summative comments.

Regarding the praise and criticism, despite cultivating a very positive culture of praise in her class (full of pep-talks and encouragement), Lee does not use a high amount of praise in her written feedback. When we discussed her feedback approach early on, she explained that she focuses more on “confidence-boosting” in her one-on-one conferences rather than written feedback; however, that doesn’t mean that she doesn’t use praise at all. She always includes some encouragement in her final summative note (often by using a “but” modifier, i.e. “your topic is interesting, but...” or “your claim is compelling, but...”) and does occasionally include reader-response based praise. Dominantly though, her comments are more critical, constructive, or generative. This was certainly a patterned that was mimicked in student interactions, where particularly in the “wrap-up” moments, students would utilize a similar technique to Lee’s summative end comment,

where they would begin and end with something positive (the sandwich technique) and also use modifiers and very often the adjective “good” alongside it. There were some instances of praise in other conversational moments (especially when prompted through self-deprecating moves), but primarily the comments were more critical, constructive, clarifying, or generative. Clarifying in fact was a very common practice in conversations, definitely influenced by the worksheet where she asked students to highlight moments when they felt confused, but could also arguably be influenced by her feedback approach, where she frequently makes use of questions as mechanisms to highlight confusion and encourage clarity on the part of the writer. While this type of feedback practice may not fall traditionally into the category of criticism, it certainly is not praise, and it could easily be argued that expressing a moment of confusion is indeed most often perceived as a negative response.

Another pattern involved the way students seemed to balance providing both reader response based and summative based comments much in the way Lee does through her marginal notes and end comments. Through interactions, I saw the familiar instructor feedback practice “coming to life” as some students would begin reading, react, and ask questions throughout, while others waited until the very end to share comments in more of a holistic summative manner. Because peer review is a hybrid type of activity, where reading, writing, and talking are all occurring at once, it was difficult to assess everything that was happening in the interactions simply based on the audio recording. For example, did the students who only share their summative comments also write reader-response oriented comments in the margins of the paper? It is definitely possible,

and even likely. However, what I found interesting was the way some students chose to verbalize all of their comments, and in this way, writers were receiving a sort of live version of the type of feedback they are used to receiving from Lee, but this time with the opportunity to actually respond and explain.

Overall, I do think there are many indications in my analysis that show a relationship between students discursive practices in feedback and that of Lee's; however, it is worth noting of course that Lee's feedback practices are not especially unique from those of many other college instructors, particularly those in composition, or those who work in areas with a lot of writing. However, from my own assessment, Lee does give a lot of feedback, and as students reported to me (and to her in the past), it was very influential and impactful in ways. As Amy expressed, she really found value in how specific Lee's comments were, expected that from her peers and tutors, and even strived to give really specific feedback herself (even though she found it challenging). Travis directly highlighted how Lee's practice of posing open-ended questions really helped him in his writing development, and there were plenty of examples of him using this strategy in his interactions (as well as most other students I observed). So, yes, while it is highly likely and even presumable that students have been influenced by many instructors over the many years they have been receiving feedback on their writing, there does seem to be an indication of correlation between Lee's approaches (specifically her emphasis on student reflection through Writer's Memos and conferences where she helps them assess and select peer feedback) and some of the ways students seemed to "take them up" when interacting with one another.

7.4 Implications of the Relationship Between Learner Uptake and Peer Response Activities

What is the relationship between peer response and learner uptake in subsequent drafts?

The relationship between peer response and learner uptake in subsequent drafts is a key question not only for this study, but any study looking at peer response because it is related to the core goals of the activity itself. When taking a process-approach to writing, as most U.S. composition curricula do, most activities employed are designed to facilitate and mobilize the writing process. Revision, in most cases, is a key part of the writing process. This is certainly true in EWP at VU, where revision as a skill comprises one of the four outcomes, and specifically asks for students to demonstrate that they can successfully revise and do so by responding to “substantive issues raised by instructors and peers” (See Appendix 1 for Outcomes). Therefore, feedback, and specifically peer feedback, must be part of the curriculum in order for students to “successfully” revise their papers. Further, in the final cover letter, it is required for students to explain how and why they met the expectations of each outcome and therefore must also directly engage and reflect upon their use of peer feedback.

So, given the relationship of peer feedback to the course goals, examining the peer review (which is the main mechanism Lee selected for students to give and receive peer feedback, as is the case with most composition instructors at VU) and its relationship to the development of subsequent drafts especially pertinent. Unfortunately, given my method of data collection (which did not allow me to collect their hard copy drafts or comments from the peer review), I had a slight limitation because I was only

able to track the inclusion of the verbalized and not written comments that occurred during the peer review session. That aside, it was interesting to note that there was very little uptake in either of the peer reviews in suggestions that I was able to track (for example with Amy using too many “I”s in her first Major Paper). But because Amy didn’t include a Writer’s Memo (which Lee asked for students to include and discuss the peer feedback they had used) and because I hadn’t yet analyzed her interaction at the time I interviewed her, it was difficult for me to assess why this might have been. Amy reported having a positive experience in her peer review and told me she did make changes based on the comments she had received; I just wasn’t able to “see” this in the way that might have been the most illuminative, and that was also a limitation with other students I saw seemingly not integrating each others’ comments. There are many conclusions I might speculate upon, and one very obvious might simply be that because the peer review is a low-stakes activity (from a grading perspective), they may have made very few changes to it before submitting their next draft. This seemed to be the case for Jake in the first peer review, where he included a disclaimer on his peer review draft (which his peers sort of jokingly commented on) which explained why his draft wasn’t completed, and the same disclaimer appeared in his first submitted draft to Lee, which was also incomplete. It is presumable that some students may just not be making changes at all (at least at that stage of the revision). However, because the idea of responding to and “selecting” peer feedback is such a prominent one (one that is promoted at the closing of the peer review for example, when Lee provides students with a “Tips for Selecting Peer Feedback” handout (See Appendix 13) with questions that they must

complete for their one-on-one conference with her and comes up again in the final cover letter where students must articulate how they responded to issues raised by their peers), it can be presumed that most students are indeed utilizing some peer feedback; and then the issue of interest becomes more so of which ones they are using and why.

I learned from Amy's and Travis's reflections on their second peer reviews (gleaned from their Writer's Memos and final reflections) that in spite of not really directly responding to issues raised by their peers (or "taking up" comments into their subsequent drafts), they did in fact respond to them in ways that wouldn't be directly apparent through attempting to examine their drafts. For example, when attempting to see whether or not Travis had taken his peer feedback, one area I looked at was his Works Cited page, to see whether or not he had taken Miriam's suggestions to integrate some texts she had shown him. I saw that he had not, but of course it was difficult to determine why. From his Writer's Memo I learned that he didn't want to use his peers suggestions for development and revision as they too greatly strayed from what he felt were his ideas. In the case of Amy, I also wasn't able to see evidence of the suggestions her peers had given her, but through her Writer's Memo, I learned that she had actually gained a lot from the interaction, and as a result, took a vastly different direction for her paper. Without this information from both students, I could have concluded that neither students integrated feedback and therefore seemingly did not value the experience or perhaps their partners in some ways, but in fact each student had a very different reason for not integrating feedback in an apparent way. And despite the fact that Travis wasn't able to successfully revise his paper (while Amy was), he did, in a way, "take up" his peers'

feedback; it just manifested in his understanding more about his writing process and strengths and weaknesses, something that couldn't be applied directly to that draft but could be useful for a future paper, which he also indicated. Perhaps it is worth reconsidering how we measure "subsequent drafts," because while of course composition instructors are looking for students to make successful revisions for the drafts that are related to the course at hand, part of the goal of first-year composition generally (and definitely within EWP) is about teaching students transferable skills beyond the context of the composition classroom, and in both the case of Amy and Travis (arguably more so with Travis because of his difficulty) they were able to learn something about the value of peer interaction that they described as beneficial to future academic and non-academic situations they might find themselves in.

Because it was difficult to measure student uptake to subsequent drafts by only looking at the relationship between the audio recordings and their next submitted drafts, the student surveys I administered helped to shed some light into looking at the relationship between peer review and learner uptake in subsequent drafts. Overall, the students did report relatively high levels of utilization of their peer feedback overall, either reporting using them all, most, or some of the time, and explained that they did so based on what they perceived as relevant, specific, manageable, and also expressed that responding to peer feedback actually improved their writing, especially when trying to add clarity or appeal to their target audience in a particular way. The idea of "improvement" was a common theme in the incentive to respond to peer feedback, and in this way, seems to add stakes to the activity and promote investment overall. Many of

these students described a recognition of the value of peer interaction as providing them with perspectives about their writing that they cannot give themselves. Throughout the survey responses, the positioning of their peers as “audience” speaks to a relationship with them beyond just that of peers, but perhaps in an elevated role directly tied to expectations of the learning outcomes.

7.5 Implications of the Relationship Between Classroom Participation and Peer Response Interactions

What is the relationship between overall classroom participation practices and practices in peer response interactions?

How students behave in different types of classroom activities and contexts was something of great interest for this study because what comprises a student “identity” is undoubtedly made up of a number of elements. Instructors and peers alike make assessments about students based on their demeanor in large group discussions, small group activities, in their writing, and in contexts outside of class as well (like one-on-one conferences), and the relationships between demeanor in these various contexts is interesting because there are at times patterns that are revealed (a student who is quiet in both larger group and smaller group discussions, for example), and at other times discrepancies (a student who has very complex and rich ideas in their writing, but never shares them verbally in any capacity, for instance). When examining levels of interactivity in peer response activities, I became interested in looking at both the patterns and the discrepancies to gain more insight into what conclusions could be drawn about certain behaviors in peer response. For example, were the students who were most

participant in large group discussions also most participant in peer review groups? Were there any identifiable patterns about the “type” of student this was? Especially for Lee’s class, as she was very interested in providing a variety of different ways for students to participate in her class, was peer response indeed an opportunity for students who were typically more withdrawn in other settings able to express themselves better in an intimate and structured activity like peer review?

From my own observations of Lee’s class, it was quite easy to identify the most “participant” students in class, and in the first peer review, there did seem to be some transference of larger group behaviors into the smaller group dynamics. For example, in Amy’s group, the two highly participant male NSs did indeed have more talk time and turn taking than she did in the interaction. The same was true for Trevor’s group, where Kai (who was very quiet in class) also had the least amount of talk time and turn-taking. That said, Kai, and Amy as well, both took opportunities in the interaction to ask questions of their classmates, and as Amy reported when we spoke, she found the interaction very valuable, and part of this was because of how capable she perceived her partners to be. This is one aspect of the relationship between overall classroom participation and peer response activities that I do see as relevant: the way instructors and students perceive students in other classroom-based and non-classroom-based activities do seem to have a bearing on how they perceive the students and their behaviors in the peer review as well. For example, when Amy talked about how she felt about her group (who had the “loud” NSs) and also how she described her roommate’s group (who had the “shy” NNSs). This issue also came up with Travis on the basis of NNS vs. NS (of

which he held a very different attitude), but there was still some assumption made related to student identity. Further, when Lee and I talked after the first peer review, she explained how she had noticed the students who talk the most in class actually encouraging and asking questions of the students who rarely talk, and in this way, there was a connection between the type of behavior that takes place in overall class participation and peer review, in that we should expect to see similar behaviors from students, and according to Lee (and evidenced by my analysis as well), this did seem to be the case.

However, by the second peer review, this conclusion was somewhat disrupted as there was a much higher level of interactivity on the part of students who had somewhat low levels of participation and engagement in other aspects of the class. For example in Amy's group, the majority of the conversation took place between her and Esther, two very typically "quiet" voices in the class. However, their third partner, Brian, was also a student who infrequently participated in class discussions. So on the one hand, looking at Amy's shift, we might see her becoming more confident and comfortable as a result of the progression of the class (gaining more intimacy with her peers, more familiarity with skills and expectations, etc.) or we might see what is merely a behavior influenced by a shifting group dynamic. Her previous group didn't have any other women, or any other NNSs, or any other "quiet" students, or any other students who had a similar topic to her (as was the case with Esther). Her "shift" could have been related to any or all of these factors. Nonetheless, it can be concluded that this type of interaction did provide another platform for Amy, Esther, and Brian who all had contributions to the conversations, and

particularly between Amy and Esther, where the interaction was very dynamic and collaborative and where Amy reported gaining a lot out of it. A similar pattern can be viewed when looking at Travis' group, where unsurprisingly Travis (who was highly participant in the class all the time regardless of activity type) was very interactive, but somewhat surprising is that the majority of interaction occurred between he and Miriam (who is typically very quiet) rather than between him and Terrance (who interacted a lot in the first peer review and also frequently "build" off one another in group discussions). Miriam really "came to life" in the second peer review interaction; she made a lot of jokes (some of which included self-deprecation), was laughing a lot, and was highly collaborative (for example when she pulled out articles from her bag to share with Travis). While I didn't record her for the first interaction, I did overhear her group (where it was her and just one other NNS male because one student didn't show up) and they seemed quite talkative. It was in fact their group that Lee was referring to when she observed "productive off-task talk" after the first peer review. So there does seem to be a possibility here as well that the nature of the peer review activity (like it might for Amy and Esther) provides Miriam a different way to express her voice than in the larger group discussions.

In sum, while the level of transferability is difficult to determine, there does seem to be a relationship between classroom participation and peer response interactions, either in the way students or instructors perceive students (and potentially react or assess as a result), or in the way students behave similarly or differently than they do in different types of activities (which could be influenced by a number of other factors as well, such

as group dynamics and point in the quarter when the activity occurs). What is most interesting to observe, in my view, is the way I think there is evidence to support what Lee had anticipated and hoped for, that peer review activities (like other small group activities) could support more interaction between students and give opportunities for more voices to be heard. Even transference of behavior did occur (which is not necessarily a good or bad thing), and there also seemed to be a supportive nature to the types of interactions students had (facilitated by question-asking, some praise, and even direct affirmations). One interesting thing to consider here, though, is that it is the traditional “conversation” that is most often a measure for participation and interactivity in peer response activities. Is the student who is talking the most the most valuable in a peer review group? Is there more of a benefit to listening? Might the most quiet student be the one who is writing the most (and potentially providing a more tangible resource for the writer once they are ready to revise)? I do not mean to suggest that being vocal is the only way to participate in any type of activity (especially peer review), as listening, reading, and writing are also ways students can be participating; however, the talking has long since been a measure for “active” participation in classroom activities, and extends even more so to peer review, where the activity takes place in person as a means to promote conversation and is often the measure for engagement and “success” on behalf of the instructor (evidenced by Lee’s enthusiasm for the types of conversations she overhear in the first peer review, for example). Examining the full breadth of participation was a limitation of this study, but the findings indicate here that it is certainly a salient category worthy of further investigation.

7.6 Implications of the Reported Student Attitudes of Peer Response Activities

What are students' reported attitudes about peer response in terms of value to their personal goals and the goals of the course?

Student attitudes toward any classroom activity or practice are of interest pedagogically because often student attitudes can greatly impact student motivation and potential “success” of a given activity. They are especially relevant to peer response activities because unfortunately, peer review (as other studies have shown) tends to have a “bad reputation” amongst students. There is a built in assumption amongst most instructors (either based on their own experiences or from reported student experiences) that in general, if students have done peer review activities before, they likely have some negative relationship toward how they feel about it. Such a notion was an impetus for Lee’s set-up activity (Peer Review: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly) which allowed students to anonymously share their experiences through freewrites and then non-anonymously share them in group discussion. The goal for Lee was to help students express their negative experiences as a way to avoid them, but also to shift away from those by collectively generating both an approach and attitude that would promote a “successful” upcoming peer review in her class. Reported student attitudes, beyond just impacting what happens in “real time” in a class, also have an impact on how the task is designed and implemented overall, as what is reported in student evaluations often influence how instructors carry forth activities (either by maintaining or modifying them), and for Lee, this is definitely the case. She takes very seriously what students report to her in evaluations, but in person as well, as she often brought up the type of feedback she

received from students as very valuable (for example, in relation to her written feedback, or the pep-talks she gave in class).

To assess reported student attitudes in relation to peer review in Lee's Spring Quarter class, I was able to look to their freewriting, Amy and Travis' interviews, the student survey I administered, and the final course evaluations, all which provided some indication to what attitudes they held both prior to and after having experienced the peer review in Lee's class. As reported by students, everyone in Lee's class (at least of the 19/21 who were present on the day of the "Good, Bad, and Ugly" activity) had actually experienced peer review prior to Lee's class. Some of these experiences were in high school while others were in college. Mostly, students reported valuing peer review overall, especially from the perspective of gaining multiple viewpoints and having the ability to improve their paper based on specific advice through revision. Some students did bring up negative impressions, concerns, or experiences, primarily focused on what they perceived as a lack of interest, investment, or engagement, and in some cases, a lack of experience or expertise (especially in comparison to instructors or tutors).

When I spoke with Amy and Travis, I got a richer impression of their attitudes they had prior to peer review in Lee's class. Amy reported a highly negative experience in her high school peer review (where it was very low-stakes, students would only give each other positive feedback, and the instructor didn't seem to care much about the activity), one which clearly impacted her anxiety and resistance when she initially heard they would also do peer review in Lee's class. Travis, on the other hand, seemed to really prefer and champion his previous peer review experience, which took place hybridly

within and outside of class (with reading many drafts outside of class and sharing comments with everyone as a group), but also shared varied experiences regarding what could make it more valuable or not (for example more of a focus on structural rather than conceptual feedback and an enhanced familiarity with his peers as a positive contributing factor).

Travis and Amy both made comparisons between their prior experiences and the experience in Lee's class after the first peer review. In the case of Amy, the first peer review in Lee's class altered her perception of the activity for the better, and she even seemed to be bolstered to enhance her own participation as a result. Travis didn't talk specifically about his impressions of the first peer review, but did talk about it in the context of how he chose to integrate feedback, which ultimately proved useful for him as he was able to recontextualize feedback from a peer and later make changes to his MP1 he submitted in his final portfolio. The comparisons he made were framed more so in terms of wishing that Lee's peer review was similar to his high school experience, where they were able to work with more partners, although he admitted that the time constraints in Lee's class were probably a barrier to making this a possibility. Although I wasn't able to attend this particular class session, Lee also took the opportunity mid-way through the quarter to gauge students' attitudes toward the first peer review, and while some of them expressed wanting some changes (like making it anonymous, for example), Lee felt satisfied enough based on their feedback (which was mostly positive) to maintain the same approach toward the activity, which was likely also enhanced by her own assessment of how the activity had gone (which was highly positive as well).

By the end of the quarter, through the student survey and course evaluations, students had the opportunity to report their experiences and impressions of peer review in Lee's class and overwhelmingly, most students did report finding it helpful, particularly from the perspective of it allowing them to access and benefit from different audience perspectives, something necessary for students to do to fulfill Outcome 1, which asks them to write appropriately for different audiences. Additionally, many students talked about the value of peer review for the revision process (which is an expectation of Outcome 4). Through peer review, they are more able to identify areas in need of revision and even sometimes (ideally) receive specific suggestions on how to do so. Another area students reported finding valuable as a part of peer review was related to the opportunity to clarify and develop their claim and argument, a skill directly tied to Outcome 3. Overall, based on the student surveys and course evaluations, students' reported attitudes in many ways connected to having value toward course goals. For the few students who expressed not valuing the activity, much of their comments seemed circumstantial or logistical, either tied to receiving too many positive and not enough constructive comments or feeling frustrated by the lack of anonymity or time constraints. Students' reported attitudes do seem to reflect a direct engagement with their goals; especially when asked about whether or not they valued their peers' advice, they indicated that they did when they related to the task expectations and their goals. They only did not value them when their peers gave comments that seemed vague or irrelevant in specific relation to their writerly goals, the assignment expectations, and/or the course outcomes overall.

The relationship between peer review and the students' goals for the course were not surprisingly more easily identifiable than the relationship between their personal goals; however, I do think that examining Travis and Amy more closely provided some insight into this, especially when Travis discussed how his second peer review experience had taught him a lot about himself as a writer in his MP2 Writer's Memo, and both he and Amy discussed the value of peer review and receiving feedback overall as a benefit that stretched beyond just the expectations of Lee's class. Furthermore, I think it can be argued that there is a connection between course goals and personal goals for many students, especially in a first-year writing curriculum which is required of all students on the basis of having highly applicable and transferable skills to both academic and non-academic contexts, a connection that might be especially enhanced due to Lee's topical focus (as Amy noted in her final cover letter as well).

While of course the nature of what is "reported" may or may not reflect attitudes entirely authentically, the nature of many of these reported attitudes being anonymous could certainly indicate an enhanced authenticity given that there is no consequence to students' honesty, be it positive or negative. Further, because Lee had framed the evaluations (as did I with my surveys) as tools to enhance and improve activities in the future, it seems students might have an incentive to express their attitudes honestly (which may be less of the case in what's reported in Writer's Memos and the final cover letter, for example, where students may be "performing" more of what they think the instructor wants to hear, which is, in most cases, that they did benefit from the types of activities the instructor had asked them to participate in). I do think the numerous ways in

which students' attitudes were collected and shared in Lee's class do have a relationship to peer review activities, one that is continuously reshaped and adjusted based on experiences, something that could be indicated by the overwhelmingly positive feedback shared at the conclusion of Lee's course. Further, interesting to note as well is that the most common suggestion for improvement amongst students was that they would like to have more time in peer review, a strong indicator of their finding value in the activity related to their course goals and presumably some amount of personal goals as well.

7.7 Implications of Classifying “Success” in Peer Response Activities

What is classified as “success” in peer response interaction, and what types of interactions support “success”?

Measurement for “success” is undoubtedly crucial for any instructor, but the means by which to measure it are complex and highly variable. Because each class taught is its own unique ecology, to some degree instructors must develop new tools for measurement each time they employ any pedagogical approach. Transferability is often difficult, however; our own past experiences (successes, failures, and everything in between) become the basis for the measurement of success, and for peer review, this couldn't be more true.

Peer review, however, presents a unique challenge in some ways, as it is often a low-stakes activity where there is not a direct “deliverable”. In most cases, peer review is used as an intermediary revision step, and what instructors are both able to “hear” and “see” is very limited. Because peer review is most often implemented in class in small groups, there are multiple conversations occurring at once. It is impossible for instructors

to hear everything that's going on, thus we often rely on what is reported from students. Further, as it is a common practice (and true with Lee's class as well) that peer review occurs in a rough draft stage, instructors also rarely view the draft produced previous to the peer review so what we are able to "see" in terms of draft development is highly limited as well.

Lee, however, does implement a number of approaches to help her gauge "success" of peer review. Aside from "checking in" with students mid-quarter about their impressions of the activity, she also plans follow-up conferences with students post-Peer Review to help students with the feedback selection process. At this point is where she does some level of assessment of how useful peer feedback comments were. She also asks students to directly share their peer review experiences in their Writer's Memos and also in their final portfolio cover letter. While of course the latter fall in the category of "reported" experiences, it is one way for Lee to get a sense of how students experienced their peer review each time and also access explanations for why and how they chose to integrate certain feedback or not. On the day of the peer review itself, it seems that "success" very much hinges upon not only the nature of the actual conversations, but whether or not conversations were actually occurring. Lee often gave students reminders about talking and interacting (often prompted by quietness), and when we spoke after each peer review, her impressions of the success of the activity was very much tied to how much conversation was occurring and also, to some degree, what types of conversations were occurring (like when she said she overheard some of the more vocal students prompting the less vocal students with questions and when she heard some

students affiliating through off-task talk). Again, the measure for success is in this case limited by what is audible, and for quieter groups and those in the back of the room (which were harder for Lee to reach or overhear), the measure for success is more challenging.

Overall, it seems to be a common expectation for both instructors and students that uptake for the subsequent draft is the ultimate goal of peer review. As Amy expressed, she valued a balance of positive and negative comments for what she was able to “take away” from the interaction. In the case of positive comments, she was able to take away confidence, with the negative comments, she was able to take away a need to revise, although these types of comments were deemed much less successful if not paired with specific advice about how to revise, something many other students reported in the student surveys as well. For many students, including Amy, comments that were all positive, though, were not useful. For Travis, success was less about the balance between positive and negative comments and more so about the contribution of multiple perspectives and the ability to receive feedback related to logical flow, structure, or expectations of the assignment. Providing the “audience” perspective was something reported upon in the student surveys as a highly valuable component of peer review as well, and undoubtedly is a facet of a “successful” peer review if given in a “helpful” way. What is “helpful” is highly variable and contextualized though; for example, in the second peer review, both Amy and Travis received this kind of audience-perspective based feedback (alerting them to the need for more clarity and context for example), but while Amy was able to take this feedback and develop her draft further, Travis was not

because the feedback strayed too far from his own ideas and expectations for the content of the paper. So while the feedback can be “helpful” in some ways, it doesn’t necessarily contribute to traditional “success” (which is often categorized as the direct uptake for a subsequent draft). However, it can be argued that there is another type of successful uptake in the case of Travis, where he expressed disappointment at not being able to develop his draft. From the experience (which was very much influenced by the peer review) he was able to glean valuable knowledge about himself as a writer that he potentially could then be able to transfer to future writing contexts.

Success in peer review sessions also seems to be very dependent upon the dynamics between individuals, but this is also something that is highly variable. Based on her previous experience of negative group dynamics, Lee decided to engage strategic grouping. According to Amy, though, her choices were not as helpful in the first peer review, while it was much more so in the second. The second peer review also seemed to be enhanced by the growing comfort amongst the class overall (whereas many students were just introducing themselves in the first peer review, they had more rapport built up in the second, and as a result, joked around, connected, and ultimately collaborated more). The value of this type of interacting is difficult to measure in terms of success, but it seems like the level of comfort does matter for students, for example when Travis explained that he preferred knowing his group, and an initial anxiety Amy felt was related to “having to talk to new people”. There also does seem to be a relationship to student perception in terms of how students assess “success,” examples we can see clearly when Amy shares the differences between her and her roommate’s experiences in

the first peer review and again when Travis talks about gaining more value from getting feedback from a NNS. Some of these perceptions are built up more generally (for example that a NNS would inherently have an elevated understanding of language) and some are very specific to a particular classroom dynamic (like when Amy said she felt lucky to be in a group with “boys who talk a lot” whom she perceived to be “good writers”). While there is undoubtedly some level of organicness that does go into these interactions, students are certainly influenced by their impressions and this could have a bearing on the opportunity for a “successful” or “unsuccessful” interaction.

Another factor for “success” seems related to logistical concerns. For Lee, scaffolding and set-up is really essential, especially as she sees it as her main role in the peer review process. For example, when she had made the assumption that students knew how to “do” peer review, she didn’t instruct them very clearly in the first peer review, and although this was certainly a minor hiccup, it could be viewed as one that potentially impacted full success. Attendance and accountability are also important factors. In both peer reviews, there was some disruption due to lack of attendance. Lee felt the negative impact of this much more strongly in the second peer review, where several students were late. Students completing their work and bringing in the appropriate materials is also key, and although this was not an issue per se in Lee’s class, there were moments (such as when Travis didn’t bring in his Work Cited list or when Miriam didn’t have a conclusion) that could be prohibitive of full and entirely “successful” collaborations. Finally, the issue of timing is one that came up again and again. Based on the evidence from audio recordings and students’ reported experiences in surveys, many of them

simply did not have enough time to read, write, and give feedback in the way they felt could be most successful, and many felt like having more time would be beneficial. Timing impacted the level of collaboration possible for many students, as the students who were slower readers had less time to give feedback and students who had their papers read first often were able to receive more feedback than their peers.

This study has shown that there are indeed many factors that contribute to “success” in peer review, and that “success” is an indicator that must be viewed in multiple different ways. When moving away from the more traditional measure for success in peer review (uptake to a subsequent draft), it seems that in fact less “successful” interactions sometimes bring about more opportunity for learning and growth. Regardless, based on Lee’s own assessments as well as those reported from students, Lee’s class did experience “success” in numerous ways as a result of peer review, whether it was improving a draft, getting to know a classmate better, creating an opportunity to confirm expectations, or just gaining more insight to students’ strengths and weaknesses as writers.

7.8 Conclusion

This study has aimed to demonstrate the complexity of peer review activities in multilingual college composition classrooms and attempted to employ a methodology that would encapsulate the many facets related to them. Unfortunately, as with all studies, there were some challenges related to limitations, particularly ones that revealed themselves at the analysis stage where it was difficult to maintain a full ecological

perspective without the ability to access certain more complex aspects of the data. Some of the limitations include:

- The audio recordings were very difficult to analyze in a fully ecological perspective. Assumptions often had to be made about what students were doing when they weren't talking (reading, writing, listening, etc.) which would have been very valuable to know, especially in relation to assessing the "success" of the interaction. I originally selected audio recording as a method because it was important that I record multiple conversations at once, and acquiring 4 small audio recording devices was easier and more affordable than acquiring 4 video recorders with tripods, etc. I would have needed multiple assistants to help with such an endeavor. Further, I had concerns with consent and participation with video recording as often students are very reluctant to participate in such a study. The other difficulty was that my field notes were quite limited with respect to the interactions I analyzed. This was also related to my interest in recording multiple conversations at once. While I was observing, I wasn't able to hear/see everything that was going on in each group I was recording, and the moments that salient in the data weren't revealed until I later listened to the recordings, not in real time as I observed. It might be worth considering only selecting 1 or 2 groups and focusing on those both in observation and also considering using a video recording device in a future study. It certainly would have enhanced my understanding of the interactions I analyzed in many ways.

- The scope of the study (originally with 4 courses), in retrospect, was far too big for this project, and since I ended up only highlighting one case study (to attempt have the depth necessary to examine multiple contextual factors at once), it would have been better to fully immerse myself in Lee's class (attending every class, all conferences, etc.) so that I could get to know each student on a closer level. Being there more regularly might also have enhanced the students' comfort with me and made them more willing to participate in other aspects of the study, like one-on-one interviews, which were so very valuable to this project and I wish I would have had more of them. In future, as much as a researcher can fully immerse themselves in the daily activities of a classroom put into perspective other aspects of the course on a much greater level, something I was able to recognize through my weekly visits. At the time of data collection, because I was attending 4 courses and working with 80+ students and 4 instructors, it was difficult to focus on all of the details that would have really enhanced a study of this kind.
- The collection of written materials in this study were also a barrier to the type of analysis that I felt was necessary for a thorough ecological examination. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to collect all of the students' materials associated with the peer review (their rough drafts, comments from peers', and peer review worksheets) both due to issues of logistics and consent (students needed to keep their hard copies for the next draft and not all of the students who agreed to be recorded also agreed to provide access to their written documents). A future study

would much more carefully take into account the procedure of certain activities and attempt to collect as many relevant materials as possible. Further, had I made observing conferences a part of my study design, I could have collected materials from students then in addition to gaining the valuable data of observing Lee advising students on how to assess and use their peer feedback.

While there were many limitations related to the study design, the data presented here does indeed achieve showing how complex these activities are and provided insight into how instructors and students alike develop, contribute to, and impact the nature of them. There were a number of pedagogical implications that are useful for instructors as well, such as:

- Noting the influence of classroom practices and teacher discourse on student interactions, for example, seeing the thread of “question-asking” woven throughout Lee’s course, very much “imprinted” by her initial teaching philosophy.
- Tracking the multitude of “take aways” in peer review, even beyond uptake, perhaps most valuable was observing the ways in which through the activity, students were able to develop a metacognitive understanding of strengths and weaknesses with respect to their own writing practices (as demonstrated by the examples of Amy and Travis).

- Recognizing the significance of transparency in interactive tasks like peer review, when students have more understanding, awareness, and investment, it does indeed promote engagement.
- Understanding importance of flexibility in task design and logistics during the task, as there is no “right” way to do peer review, nor is it advisable to be prescriptive. As Lee’s class showed, constant checkpoints and modification was optimal for varying levels of success in the activity.
- Developing concrete ways of task assessment, such as the one-on-one student conferences and reflective writing artifacts such as Writer’s Memos not only allowed for greater perspective for this class but also provided a mechanism for assessment and development of the activity in future classes.

There are numerous valuable pedagogical implications beyond the ones listed here, and overall, this study has highlighted the value in researching classroom activities like peer response in a rich and focused manner. A future study should take an even closer view, and utilize more dynamic methods of data collection (such as video recording) in order to provide a fully ecological perspective; however, in this study’s attempt to do so, I would argue that we have gained a much richer understanding of peer review, particularly when looking back at the studies that have come before it. I think much more will be gained by looking at the comparative data as the study had originally intended, but something that became very clear by using such a contextualist approach is that this type of study requires a lot of time, energy, and work to achieve the level of analysis required for such a deep and complex perspective. It is my intention to continue working

with this data as well as the other data I have collected whilst simultaneously applying what I have learned to develop useful pedagogical models that will be beneficial both at the curricular administrative level, and for my own teaching as well. Additionally, my hope is that those who are interested in this type of study will build upon what I have learned methodologically to continue getting us closer to a richer understanding of the ways in which writing processes are deeply situated, highly contextual, and ultimately interconnected to many ecologies that take place both within and outside of the college composition classroom.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

Expository Writing Program Outcomes

1. To demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that writers use in different writing contexts.

- The writing employs style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a particular genre and situation.
- The writer is able to demonstrate the ability to write for different audiences and contexts, both within and outside the university classroom.
- The writing has a clear understanding of its audience, and various aspects of the writing (mode of inquiry, content, structure, appeals, tone, sentences, and word choice) address and are strategically pitched to that audience.
- The writer articulates and assesses the effects of his or her writing choices.

2. To read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts and incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully in order to generate and support writing.

- The writing demonstrates an understanding of the course texts as necessary for the purpose at hand.
- Course texts are used in strategic, focused ways (for example: summarized, cited, applied, challenged, re-contextualized) to support the goals of the writing.
- The writing is intertextual, meaning that a “conversation” between texts and ideas is created in support of the writer’s goals.
- The writer is able to utilize multiple kinds of evidence gathered from various sources (primary and secondary – for example, library research, interviews, questionnaires, observations, cultural artifacts) in order to support writing goals.
- The writing demonstrates responsible use of the MLA (or other appropriate) system of documenting sources.

3. To produce complex, analytic, persuasive arguments that matter in academic contexts.

- The argument is appropriately complex, based in a claim that emerges from and explores a line of inquiry.
- The stakes of the argument, why what is being argued matters, are articulated and persuasive.
- The argument involves analysis, which is the close scrutiny and examination of evidence and assumptions in support of a larger set of ideas.

- The argument is persuasive, taking into consideration counterclaims and multiple points of view as it generates its own perspective and position.
- The argument utilizes a clear organizational strategy and effective transitions that develop its line of inquiry.

4. To develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing.

- The writing demonstrates substantial and successful revision.
- The writing responds to substantive issues raised by the instructor and peers.
- Errors of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics are proofread and edited so as not to interfere with reading and understanding the writing.

APPENDIX 2

EWP STATEMENT ON ASSESSMENT OF AND FEEDBACK ON GRAMMAR CORRECTNESS

Context

English Language Learners (ELLs) are a vibrant addition to our composition classrooms, contributing to our campus' linguistic and cultural diversity and enriching the perspectives students bring to the work of reading and writing in our classes. Like all admitted UW students, ELL students have met and exceeded admissions requirements and are highly qualified. Like many UW students, some of these ELL students will also need additional support as they continue to develop their English language proficiency. While the Expository Writing Program is working to offer sufficient support for our instructors to ensure both they and their students have access to the resources and best practices they need to foster success in the writing classroom (to learn more about these resources and best practices, please consult the EWP website), this statement is meant to clarify instructor responsibilities as well as EWP expectations for assessing and giving feedback on grammar correctness in student writing. Assessing and giving feedback on papers seems to be of particular concern for many instructors, primarily because many of us are unclear about the level of attention we should be paying to grammar errors. When responding to early drafts of ELL student writing, research and experience have taught us to “read through” grammar errors (in other words, to prioritize and selectively mark but “read through” grammar errors) in order to attend to the “higher order” content-based issues such as argument, analysis, use of evidence, and organization. These “higher order” skills, as evidenced by the first three EWP Outcomes, are the most important skills taught in a writing class, and research has shown they are also the skills most likely to improve over the course of a quarter. This does not mean, however, that we should ignore “lower order” concerns such as grammar, particularly repeated errors that interfere with comprehension, and ELL students miss an opportunity to learn when we ignore their grammar mistakes. Rather, the goal should be to help empower students—ELLs and native speakers alike—to become self-editors of their own work and to research their grammar errors as a means to learn through self-correction.

Expectations

While we cannot realistically expect ELL students to achieve native speaker accuracy in a span of eleven weeks, or even four years for that matter, we can and should expect ELL students to self-edit their work, a skill at which students can become more proficient in eleven weeks with the support of feedback from composition instructors, writing centers and peers, and access to effective resources (such as handbooks) related to grammar, usage, and style. Indeed, students' ability to self-edit their writing is an important part of the EWP's Outcome Four, which requires that a student's portfolio demonstrate the

ability to revise, edit, and proofread his or her writing. In fulfillment of this outcome, we can and should expect students to produce at least one “presentation draft” (a paper that demonstrates students’ ability to edit their writing) in the graded portion of their portfolios.

Practical Applications

Self Editing: Studies have shown that students are able to self-edit their work when teachers circle or mark a check next to grammar errors. This approach has proven just as effective as when instructors correct or code (using a coding system such as VT for verb tense) the grammar issue for the student. So in most cases cueing students to the presence of an error (without fixing the error or marking what type of error it is) and ensuring that they are aware of the available resources is sufficient for self-editing. In those few cases in which errors prove overwhelming to reading comprehension, an instructor should invite the student to have a conversation with him or her or an ELL consultant as soon as possible as a means to provide greater individualized support.

Pathways for Cueing and Timing: When and how we cue our students to error is important, and depends in part on our students’ needs, the number of drafts we have assigned, the degree to which the error interferes with our ability to assess our assignment’s targeted outcomes, and our philosophy as instructors. Timing and context are important. Too much attention to grammar errors on early drafts can cause students to fixate on correcting marked errors rather than developing ideas. Too little attention to grammar errors until the portfolio sequence can leave students feeling overwhelmed trying to make final revisions while also identifying errors and demonstrating the ability to self-edit. To help instructors decide when and how to respond to error, we have identified three pathways instructors can take:

- **First Pathway: Revision Throughout: Fewer Assignments, Multiple Drafts of Each:** This pathway allows students the opportunity to produce more than one draft of each shorter and major assignment throughout the quarter, with grammar feedback on later drafts. In this approach, instructors focus on higher order concerns in early drafts before prioritizing and selectively marking errors on later drafts, which students then edit during the portfolio sequence. This pathway means assigning fewer short assignments during the first two sequences in order to allow students an opportunity to first address higher order concerns before receiving error markings on a second draft, which they can edit during the portfolio sequence. This pathway can be a good option for instructors who have a high percentage of ELL students, as it provides students with a head start on editing for their portfolios.
- **Second Pathway: “Higher Order” Feedback and “Lower Order” Cueing for Self-Editing Throughout the Quarter:** This pathway allows students the opportunity to edit drafts throughout the quarter. In this approach, instructors read through but

mark student errors selectively from the beginning of the course, taking care to emphasize higher order concerns, and students have the chance to edit their writing along the way. One effective and time saving strategy would be to mark error in only one paragraph and ask students to edit that paragraph on their second draft, which instructors then quickly review. Later during the portfolio sequence, students can then edit the rest of each paper they select for the portfolio. This pathway can be a good option for instructors who only need to target error feedback to the needs of a few students prior to the portfolio sequence.

- **Third Pathway: Focus on “Higher Order” Feedback all Quarter, Defer Cueing for Grammar Until the Final Portfolio:** This pathway allows for reading through error until the portfolio sequence of the course. In this approach, instructors focus mainly on higher order concerns throughout the first two sequences before attending to grammar concerns during the portfolio sequence. Please keep in mind that for some ELL students this approach can require a lot of grammar and self-editing instruction during the last two weeks of the course, and some students may feel overwhelmed trying to make final portfolio revisions while also identifying errors and demonstrating the ability to self-edit. As such, this option requires that instructors provide the full two weeks allotted for the portfolio sequence.

Assessing students’ needs early on and providing them opportunities to articulate their goals will help instructors decide which pathway to choose. Ideally, no matter which pathway you choose, rather than marking every error, prioritize the most common and severe errors, identify them in a student’s paper, and point the student to grammar resource handbooks and websites, such as Writer’s Help.

APPENDIX 3

PROTOCOL FOR TEACHING ASSISTANT RECRUITMENT

(This email will be sent to all teaching assistants who teach composition courses in Expository Writing Program)

Hello. My name is Amanda Hobmeier, and I am a doctoral student in the Department of English. I am writing to talk about my study and to ask for your help. I am currently recruiting participants for my dissertation project on peer response groups in college composition. I am interested in how teaching philosophies, task design and implementation, and instructor feedback impact interactions between students in classroom activities like peer response.

I am doing this study because while there is a lot of early research on this topic, it has been varied, and underinvestigated in recent years. Furthermore, given the rapid and increasing linguistic diversification of composition classrooms, studying such a topic now is imperative. Many students and instructors alike express frustration with these types of activities, and as such, this research aims to improve teaching practices.

If you decide to participate, I will observe and audio-tape the composition class you teach approximately four times during the Spring of 2013, two of which will occur during your peer response activities. I will also interview you during the quarter and after the quarter for about an hour twice. I will also talk with you about the class I observe after the class ends, for about 15 minutes.

Although this study is related to your courses, participating in this study is voluntary and totally up to you. My role in your class will be entirely observational, and not evaluative. If you decide to volunteer, you can withdraw at anytime. The comfort and convenience for you and your class is of the utmost importance to me. I hope the results of this study will help us gain knowledge about how to improve peer response task design and implementation. This information will be useful to researchers, language teachers, writing program directors, and especially, teachers themselves.

Could you let me know whether you would be interested in participating in this study? If you are interested in participation in the study, please e-mail me with your phone number. In case our communication is delayed by e-mail, and I do not hear from you within 5 days, I will give you a follow-up call. (Please note that we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any information sent by email)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Amanda Hobmeier

APPENDIX 4

EMAIL PROTOCOL FOR RECRUITMENT OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS

(This email will be sent to those who responded positively to my e-mail)

Dear X,

I am writing to follow up on the research study on peer response in composition classrooms. I e-mailed you earlier to talk about my study and ask you for help. Thank you for your interest in participating in the study.

I would like to meet with you in my office (insert location) some time in the next few days to go over the study in more detail, so that you can decide whether or not you would like to participate in the study. During the next few days, I am available [specify dates and time]. Would any of these dates work for you? Please let me know.

Again, it is totally up to you to participate or not. If you have decided not to participate, I would appreciate if you could inform me.

(Please note that I cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any information sent by email)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Amanda Hobmeier

FOLLOW UP PHONE PROTOCOL FOR RECRUITMENT OF TAS

(I will call those who did not respond to my initial email in five days)

Is this _____? Hi, my name is Amanda Hobmeier. I e-mailed you the other day to talk about my dissertation project on peer response in composition classrooms. Is this a good time to talk?

About five days ago, I sent you an email asking whether you could participate in my dissertation project on peer response in composition classrooms. Are you interested in participating at this stage?

[If yes] I am wondering if I could make an appointment with you to talk some time in the next few days. What will happen in that meeting is that you and I will go over the study in more detail, so that you can make a final decision about whether or not you would like to participate in the study, and if you decide you would like to, I will have you sign a consent form. What is your schedule like in the next few days? [Make an appointment to meet if the TA is willing.] OK, I look forward to seeing you then.

[If no] That's okay. Thank you very much for your time, X.

APPENDIX 5

PROTOCOL FOR IN-CLASS RECRUITMENT

(to be conducted in the composition classes the TAs are assigned to teach)

Hello. My name is Amanda Hobmeier, and I am a doctoral student in the Department of English. I am studying composition teaching practices for my dissertation project, and I am here to talk about the study and to ask for your help.

I am interested in how students interact during peer response activities when working on writing in their composition courses. The goal of my study is to provide insights and suggestions for training future writing teachers, as well as for improving the quality of college writing instruction.

Your instructor has granted me permission to observe your class this quarter. If you grant me permission as well, I will be present a few times this quarter, in order to observe your instructor's teaching and occasionally, your interactions with each other during peer response. When I visit, I will be observing quietly and taking notes. Sometimes, I will wish to audio-tape the class during group interactions. An end-of-quarter questionnaire will be given to you in the end of this quarter, asking for your impression of this class, and specifically reflect on your group interactions. If you are willing to participate further, I will also look at the instructors' comments on your papers, and have a follow-up interview with you.

In order to protect your privacy, any identifiable information about you will NOT be used in any final products of this research. The audio recording will only be used for data analysis, and will NOT be accessible to anyone else except me and my dissertation committee. If you don't want to be audio taped, you can choose to sit in a place beyond the reach of the recorder. The final questionnaire and follow-up interviews will be anonymous, and your instructor will NOT have access to your responses during this quarter. If he/she requests to see the results, the results will be presented only after the final grading is finished and the quarter is officially over.

Although this study is related to your course, participating in this study is voluntary and totally up to you. Whether to participate in this study will NOT affect your grade in this class. If you decide to volunteer, you can withdraw anytime. If you don't want me to be in the classroom, you can ask me to leave at any time.

[Distribute copies of the consent form.] Please mark 'yes' to the activities in the consent form if you're interested in participating for the study. If you select 'yes', please sign and return the form to me. If you are not interested in participating, you do not need to complete the form, and may hand the form back to me without completing it. I will collect this from you after the class. Thank you for your help and have a nice class.

APPENDIX 6

EMAIL PROTOCOL FOR RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS

(This email will be sent to those who respond positively to follow-up interviews on their consent form)

Dear X,

I am writing to follow up on the research study on your composition instructor. I came to your English class the other day to talk about the study. Thank you for returning the consent form and for your interest in participating in the study.

I would like to meet with you in my office (insert location) some time in the next few days to go over the study in more detail, so that you can decide whether or not you would like to participate in the study. During the next few days, I am available [specify dates and time]. Would any of these dates work for you? Please let me know.

Again, it is totally up to you to participate or not. If you have decided not to participate, I would appreciate if you could inform me. If I don't hear otherwise from you within five days, I'll give you a call to find out if you're interested.

(Please note that we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any information sent by email)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Amanda Hobmeier

FOLLOW UP PHONE PROTOCOL FOR RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS

(I will call those who did not respond to my initial email in five days)

Is this _____? Hi, this is Amanda Hobmeier. I came to your English class the other day to talk about my dissertation project on your composition instructor. Is this a good time to talk?

Thank you for returning the consent form and for your interest in participating in the study. About five days ago, I sent you an email asking whether you could participate in my dissertation project on composition instructors. Are you still interested in participating at this stage?

[If yes] I am wondering if I could make an appointment with you to talk some time in the next few days. What will happen in that meeting is that you and I will go over the study in more detail, so that you can make a final decision about whether or not you would like to participate in the study. What is your schedule like in the next few days? [Make an appointment to meet if the student is willing.] OK, I look forward to seeing you then.

[If no] That's okay. Thank you very much for your time, X.

APPENDIX 7

Interview protocol for TAs

Interview 1 (beginning of the quarter)

Background

1. Where are you from?
2. What's your first language? What languages do you speak?
3. What is your educational background before you came to this University?
4. Have you lived (and/or studied) in English-speaking countries other than your current stay in the US? When and for what purpose?
5. Which program are you in at the University? When did you enter the program?
6. How long have you taught before? What subjects? In which contexts?
7. How long have you been teaching in the Writing Program? What courses?
8. What are your academic plans after graduation, and for the future?

Teacher training and professional development

1. How was your previous teaching experience different/similar to your experience in teaching college composition?
2. What is considered good teaching in general to you?
3. What do you think is a good college composition teacher?
4. How do you see yourself as a college composition teacher?
5. What kind of relationship do you want to develop with your students? Has anything changed since you started teaching?
6. Do you see teaching as part of your future academic aspirations?
8. Have you had training in teaching? How helpful was it?

Classroom Interaction Activities

1. Do you use interactive activities in your class? Which ones and why?
2. What are your experiences with peer response?
3. Have you had more or less success with peer response in different environments or with different types of students?
4. What are some challenges you have faced, if any?
5. Do students seem to benefit from and/or enjoy peer response? Why or why not?
6. What strategies have been successful for you?

After-class interview:

1. Overall, how do you feel about your class/conference today?
2. What was successful and what wasn't? Why?
3. How would you describe your interaction with students and students' interaction with one another?
4. Was there anything you planned to do today, but couldn't do? If so, what was it? Why couldn't you do it?
5. Any other comments?

6*. If this is the first class, I will ask: How did you establish your teacher identity for the first day? How did your plan work out?

7*. Depending on what happens in the class, I may ask questions to clarify certain moments I found interesting: *You did X in class today and your student responded X; what do you think of that moment? Why did you do what you did?*

After-quarter interview

1. Overall, how do you feel about your quarter working as a TA in this particular context?
2. Classroom practice
 - 2.1 I observed you X times this quarter. Do you think the observation classes were typical classes? (in terms of your instruction, students' interactions, and the general atmosphere?)
 - 2.2 Is there anything that you want to change or improve in terms of your instruction (in-class instruction, written feedback, conferences)? What have improved this quarter and what areas do you think you need to keep working on?
 - 2.3 What has it been like teaching this group of students this quarter overall?
 - 2.4 What characteristics (unique to this group) have you noticed among your students?
 - 2.5 I have noticed that you have a diverse group of students (native speakers/non-native speakers, levels of writing, race/ethnicity, and different characteristics). How does the diversity manifest in your class in terms of instruction, classroom management, interaction and general atmosphere?
 - 2.6 What are some successes you have accomplished dealing with this group of students? What are some challenges and difficulties that you have experienced? How did you overcome those challenges?
3. Student Interaction
 - 3.1 Did you have a lot of student interaction in your class? Why or why not?
 - 3.2 If you use a lot of peer interaction activities, what benefits do you think they offer students, both in the task itself and longer term skill building?
 - 3.3 What types of interactions did you observe in your class? Were they particular to certain situations or types of students?

APPENDIX 8

Interview protocol for students

Interview with students

1. What is your language background?
2. Why did you take this writing class, and this specific section?
3. What do you think of your writing class overall?
4. What do you think about peer response activities overall?
5. Do you find peer response helpful? Why or why not?
6. Do you value your peers' suggestions? Why or why not?
7. How often do you use your peers' suggestions in your paper?
8. How could peer response be improved?
9. What kind of other interactions help your writing?

APPENDIX 9

Student Questionnaire

- 1. Do you find peer response helpful? Why or why not? Be specific.**

- 2. Do you value your peers' suggestions? Why or why not? What makes them valuable or not? Be specific.**

- 3. How often do you use your peers' suggestions in your paper? What are your reasons for doing so?**

- 4. How could peer response be improved? What ideas do you have to make it better? Be specific.**

- 5. What other kinds of group activities in class will help you with your writing? Be specific.**

APPENDIX 10:

Course Syllabus

SYLLABUS:

English 131: The Rhetoric of Pop Culture

English 131 is designed to prepare you for your academic career. Regardless of what path you are considering, be it Political Science, Engineering, Biology, or Pre-Law, you will require the ability to think critically about the world around you and articulate that thinking in writing. Your coursework, both now and in the years to come, will require you to produce writing that varies greatly in tone, style, research methods, complexity, and organization. The ability to clearly articulate your ideas, however, will always be necessary regardless of framework. To that end, this class seeks to prepare you with the tools necessary for a successful academic life:

- the ability to thoughtfully analyze texts, materials, and the arguments of others
- the techniques of successful research and how to incorporate that research in your arguments
- an understanding of how to articulate your own complex claims
- the ability to revise successfully

This section of 131 will use popular culture as a vehicle to engage with the specific strategies of **rhetorical analysis** and writing discussed above. Non-traditional literary **texts** such as television shows and movies can serve as accessible mediums for discussion and **critical analysis**, as well as the ability to create **complex, stake-driven claims** of your own. In addition to giving you the opportunity to choose texts that interest you, popular culture allows us to use a topic that you are already thinking about critically to explore strategies of articulating that critical thinking on paper. Popular culture shapes our thinking in overt and subtle ways, and by using writing strategies to break down how that shaping occurs, we can become more astute and engaged citizens as well as writers.

As fun as popular culture can be to work with, it is important to remain **critically engaged** as much as possible. You should come to class ready to carefully unpack complex meanings as well as the strategies that produce them. It is important that you be prepared to examine texts, engage in respectful and informed conversations, and, of course, write, write, and then write some more. If you are willing to put in the effort, you will leave this class with the tools to be a successful academic writer and critically engaged member of society.

APPENDIX 11:

Assignment Sequences

Short Assignment 1: Review

You have already learned how to critically analyze (summarize as well as evaluate) texts in class. For Short Assignment 1, you will put that analysis into more formal writing.

Choose any one scholarly article we have discussed in class and write a review of it.

By “review,” I mean summarize the author’s main argument, analyze how that argument is articulated and supported, and then provide your own evaluation for whether or not that argument was effective and why. Your review should follow the basic style and audience guidelines as the reviews we looked at in class. You should also pay attention to tone, audience, and organization.

This assignment will also include your first **Writer's Memo**. At the end of your review, simply write a note to me about your writing process. How did you get started on this assignment? How might it be different from writing you did in high school (like a book review)? What are your strengths and weaknesses as a writer and how are they demonstrated in this assignment? This is an informal piece of writing that helps both you and I understand the choices you make as a writer.

Requirements:

- 2-3 pages, double spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins
- Clear summary and analysis of scholar’s argument
- Clear evaluation of your own
- Consistent tone
- Clear organization

Writer's Memo, **additional 1 page**, 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins.

Short Assignment 2: Letters

As a class, we both analyzed the articles from the debate “Should Popular Culture Challenge Traditional Values?” as well as applied those arguments to an episode of *Sports Night*. Modeling our in-class activities, you will apply those same arguments to a *new* pop culture text of your choosing. **For Short Assignment 2, you will write two letters, each 1 ½ - 2 pages long, each of which will embody the rhetorical style and argument of Mark Wolf and Keith Booker and will address your chosen pop culture text.** One letter will be from Wolf to Booker and the other will be from Booker to Wolf. Both letters will maintain the original rhetoric and argument of the authors’ articles but will be directed at your new pop culture text. You are more than welcome to have some fun with this—make each letter as sassy, snarky, polite, or friendly as you would like. Be sure, however, to clearly articulate a position in each letter regarding your text. You will

also be required to submit another **writer's memo** with this assignment in which you reflect on your specific strategies to embody Booker and Wolf's rhetoric as well as how you developed the new argument about your pop culture text. Also, how did you feel about the writing process this time? How was it different than the review essay? What are your strengths and weaknesses in this assignment?

Requirements:

- Total of 3-4 pages, double spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins
- Clear new argument in each about single pop culture text
- Consistent embodiment of each scholar's original rhetoric
- Clear organization

Writer's memo, an **additional 1 pg**, double spaced and in 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins

Major Paper 1: A Critical Conversation

At this point in the quarter, you have acquired a number of the writing and analytical skills necessary to compose a more substantial project. As a class, we have explored the nature of *popular culture*, its various forms, and the ways in which those forms have directly impacted your lives. In SA 1, you developed your *rhetorical analysis* skills by writing a critical review of one of our course texts. Building on the *analytical tools* practiced in SA 1, SA 2 gave you the opportunity to more fully embody specific *rhetorical strategies* in your own work while placing two arguments in direct *conversation* with one another. These tools will allow you to successfully produce your first major paper.

Pop Culture Universe's Questions: Is the book actually dying? Do celebrities have responsibilities as role models? Has the internet made pop culture less...popular? Does what you like define who you are? Does popular culture reflect American values or determine them? Are video games art?

Your Task: Major Paper 1 will allow you to develop a more *complex claim* of your own and to articulate *personal stakes*. **Choosing one of the questions from Pop Culture Universe, develop your own stake-driven claim and fully engage that claim with the existing Pop Culture Universe conversation.** To begin the writing process, you should start by *rhetorically analyzing* the arguments of the supporting scholars. Once you have a firm grasp of the existing conversation, formulate your own ideas and develop a *complex claim* with which to place yourself in that conversation, using evidence from the supporting texts.

In crafting this major paper, you should be employing your skills of *rhetorical analysis*, *critical thinking*, *complex claim development*, and *intertextuality*. Make sure you develop a clear argument of your own that fully and consistently participates in whichever conversation you choose to engage with. **I am looking for a compelling, interesting,**

well-organized argument, substantiated with textual evidence.

Requirements:

- 5-7 double spaced pages (1500-2400 words), 12 pt. Times New Roman font
- Based on a unique and complex stake-driven claim of your own, clearly articulated and supported throughout the text of the paper
- Thoughtful analysis of supporting texts
- Supporting texts and your argument must all participate in a single, clear conversation
- Well-organized with clear signposting
- Proper use of MLA formatting and citations
- Works Cited page, also in MLA formatting
- Proofread, proofread, proofread

Targeted Outcomes: 1, 2, 3

Major Paper Draft 2:

This is a space to upload your second draft of Major Paper 1. Please include a **Writer's Memo**, using conventional guidelines, in which you describe your revision process. What was some of the feedback you received from your peers and how did you utilize it in your revisions? Was there any feedback you did not incorporate into this draft? Why not?

Some other things to remember for your second draft:

* Make sure you have **engaged with and cited two of the secondary sources from Pop Culture Universe**

* You include a **Works Cited page**

SA 3: Keyword

From the Oxford English Dictionary: key-word *n.* (a) a word serving as a key to a cipher or the like; (b) a word or thing that is of great importance or significance; *spec.* in information-retrieval systems, any informative word in the title or text of a document, etc., chosen as indicating the main content of the document.

In your second major paper, you will be following your own line of inquiry for a pop culture text of your choosing. In preparation for this research-based paper, your first short assignment will help you frame your argument. **For this assignment, you will craft a focused, targeted inquiry and definition of the keyword/critical lens that you will be exploring in your MP2 pop culture text.** In selecting a keyword, make sure you choose something about which you can write 2-3 pages. In order to conduct an effective analysis and craft a persuasive argument about your text, you must have a strong understanding of your keyword and be able to clearly articulate it to your reader. This paper will accomplish both, and you will be able to use excerpts from this paper in MP 2.

This paper won't have a straightforward claim; rather, it will be a thoughtful articulation

of your inquiry process to work towards your claim for MP 2. Think about what you already know about your keyword, and what you want to know more about. Do some research into the word's common usage and historical context. Familiarize yourself with the term in its various iterations. Think about how you might need to narrow or broaden your definition of the term. Ask yourself: what do I need to know about this keyword in order to make an interesting, complex, and effective argument about my pop culture text? Finally, gesture towards how this new understanding of the term will figure into your MP, both conceptually and structurally.

This assignment will also include another **Writer's Memo**. Discuss how you came to choose this particular keyword, be more specific about its potential applications for your Major Paper 2, and discuss any potential drawbacks or concerns you have with your keyword. Also, how did the specific genre of this kind of writing affect your writing choices?

Requirements:

2-3 double-spaced pages, 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins

Writer's Memo with standard guidelines

SA 4: Annotated Bibliography

To help find and effectively use secondary sources for Major Paper 2: Pop Culture Analysis, this short “paper” is an Annotated Bibliography. An Annotated Bibliography is a list of sources (in MLA Works Cited page format) that provides a summary of each source and how it will be used in your paper.

Each annotation should include:

- information about the writer (a sentence or two)
- a summary of the text's most important information

Major Paper 2: Pop Culture Analysis

Thus far in the course, we have explored some of the approaches and theories that ground cultural studies work, we have reviewed how writers use those theories to analyze pop culture texts, and we have analyzed pop culture texts ourselves. For this sequence, you have already chosen a critical approach in your keyword essays as well as conducted relevant research. Now, you will begin putting together your paper.

Building on the work you've done so far, this paper will be a research-based pop culture analysis of a text of your choice. **Choose a pop culture text that you are interested in (film, TV show*, novel, graphic novel, music, etc.) and conduct an analysis of the text.** Unpack the text for how it is exploring any cultural, social, and/or political issues that may be at work. Is the text implicitly or explicitly taking a stand on an issue? Is the

text presenting alternative perspectives on an issue? What ideological issues are at work in the text? Keep in mind that your analysis can be a critique.

Your primary claim for this paper should make an argument about how the text is working with the issue(s), theme, or theoretical approach you've identified. Your support should draw on specific examples from the text that you explore and analysis to help prove your claim. Be sure to include a discussion of the stakes (why does this matter? What does this help us understand?)

To help establish the context of your discussion and support your argument, you should **use at least three secondary sources.**

* A note about TV shows. You can talk about a series as a whole, but your argument may be better served if you zero in on one season/group of episodes, or even just one episode.

Requirements:

5-7 double-spaced pages, 12pt Times New Roman font with 1 in. margins

MLA citations

Works Cited page

Major Paper 2nd Draft

This is a space to upload your second draft of Major Paper 2. Please include a **Writer's Memo**, using conventional guidelines, in which you describe your revision process. What was some of the feedback you received from your peers and how did you utilize it in your revisions? Was there any feedback you did not incorporate into this draft? Why not?

Electronic Portfolio

Your final assignment for this class is an online portfolio, which is worth 70% of your final grade. The portfolio is your chance to show yourself and me that your writing has developed over the course of the quarter and that you now understand and can apply the course outcomes. See the attached document for detailed portfolio instructions. Your online portfolio will include:

- **A Cover Letter**
- **A section for each outcome with a revised draft (or a section for each paper, organization is up to you)**
- **A Section with all the drafts you chose not to revise: "Compendium"**

Note: All these drafts must be included AND the appropriate page length in order for your portfolio to be considered complete!

APPENDIX 12:

First Peer Review Worksheet

Peer Reviewer: _____

Author: _____

- 1. What is the claim of this paper? Does it contain all the elements of a complex claim (counter argument, central claim, evidence, stakes, signposting)? Is it clear?**

- 2. Do the provided examples clearly support the claim? Which piece of evidence is most compelling? The least?**

- 3. Does each paragraph concretely connect back and further the main argument? Which body paragraph does this most effectively? The least?**

- 4. What are the three strongest parts of this paper? The three weakest?**

- 5. Finally, what is your personal reader response? What sense are you left with? Are you persuaded, compelled, or confused? Do you feel you've learned something new or are left thinking about something in a new way?**

APPENDIX 13:

Tips for Selecting Peer Feedback Handout

Tips for Selecting Peer Feedback

More often than not, writing is collaborative. This does not necessarily mean that all writing is authored by multiple people (although this does happen often, particularly in the sciences); it means that, in the process of brainstorming, drafting, and revising, you have probably received input and suggestions from others. As your writing develops, it is important to solicit feedback from your instructor, writing tutors, and your peers. Experienced writers know that feedback from peers is valuable because others can potentially see things in a paper that the author cannot. Peer reviewers are able to examine your writing more objectively, offering a reader's perspective that can help you fine-tune your ideas, explore unexamined assumptions, and clarify your language. However, just like writing itself, selecting from and responding to others' feedback requires thoughtful analysis and consideration on your part. Here are some things to consider when deciding what changes to make in response to peer feedback:

- First, decide whether a particular comment corresponds to revision or editing, and prioritize higher order revision issues. Editing comments should be considered last, after you have addressed the higher order revision issues your peer reviewer has suggested.
- Put your peer's comments in conversation with the assignment prompt. Will making the suggested changes help your paper meet the requirements?
- Always keep your purpose in mind. Will the suggested changes take your paper in a new direction that you don't necessarily need or want to follow?
- Will making the change require a more thorough overhaul of the paper? For example, if your peer suggests changing your claim, you will likely need to heavily revise the supporting paragraphs. Will such intensive changes strengthen your paper?
- Summarize your peer reviewer's comments and suggestions in writing. This can help you reflect on how their suggestions relate to your overall goals, and it can help you conceptualize their comments in a new way.
- If you're still unsure whether or not to incorporate a peer review suggestion, check with your instructor.

- 1) Read through the peer review comments. Are there any recurring themes?
- 2) What are the things that you have done well?
- 3) What are the major areas you need to work on? How are you going to revise your paper?
- 4) What was the most useful feedback you received? Was there any feedback you won't be incorporating into revisions?