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Editor's Introduction

Dana R. Ferris
University of California, Davis

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JOURNAL OF RESPONSE TO WRITING

Editor's Introduction

Dana R. Ferris

University of California, Davis

Welcome to the second issue of the *Journal of Response to Writing*! We are delighted with the warm response to this new journal and to our first issue, of which we are very proud. Thanks again to the authors who shared their work with us and to our Editorial Advisory Board.

In this second issue, we have three new articles—one research article, one teaching article, and an action research report—and a book review. We are pleased with how the articles in the second issue cover a range of response topics—from corrective feedback on language errors to a technique for helping students to take ownership over their own revision effort to an approach designed to facilitate more collaboration between writer and reader in feedback. These articles reflect not only a range of topics but also illustrate the diversity of genres and research methods we would like to feature in this journal.

The first article, written by K. James Hartshorn and Norman W. Evans, “The Effects of Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback: A 30-Week Study,” presents new research on a fascinating technique, Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback (DWCF), which has emerged as a pedagogical innovation and research interest over the past few years. As Hartshorn and

Evans explain in this paper, DWCF was developed from both the findings of the larger research base on written corrective feedback (WCF) and from skill acquisition theory in second language acquisition. In the DWCF model, learners write short in-class texts on a regular (almost daily) basis, receive immediate (at the next class) coded feedback, and then chart their error patterns and self-edit their texts. As the authors explain here and in their earlier work (e.g., Evans et al., 2010; Hartshorn et al., 2010), DWCF differs from traditional process writing models of composition instruction in that the writing/feedback loop is frequent, manageable, individualized, and meaningful.

In this paper, the authors present findings from a 30-week (two-semester) study in which one group of learners (second language writers in an intensive English program in the U.S.) took an adjunct DWCF class, and a control group took a traditional grammar class; both groups at the same time completed separate process-oriented writing classes. The findings clearly demonstrate that the treatment (DWCF) group outperformed the control in linguistic accuracy at the end of 30 weeks, while both groups' rhetorical effectiveness, fluency, and lexical complexity improved over the study period. In short, DWCF accomplished its purpose (to help learners make progress in accuracy/reducing errors) while not detracting from their progress in other important writing skills. This study therefore adds further support to the small but growing research base suggesting that DWCF is an effective pedagogical approach for student writers.

In the second article, "Revising by Numbers: Promoting Student Revision Through Accumulated Points," Mark McBeth describes how he encourages student autonomy through a points-based system that rewards students for their efforts in meaningful revisions of their texts. McBeth begins by articulating a problem: His students arrive in college already convinced that they are bad writers. He combats that by teaching them about revision, telling them "that until they have invested in the rigors of a revision-based writing course, they could no more logically claim themselves as bad writers than they could announce themselves bad chefs if they had never practiced culinary techniques or bad athletes had they never faithfully trained in sporting activities." Since revising one's own writing is hard and no one is born knowing how to do so effectively,

students will resist engaging in the revision process meaningfully—which is why incentivizing (through grade points) engaged, conscientious revision is an effective way to convince students that the time and effort spent on revision is the only way of producing writing they are pleased with. Seeing is believing.

The bulk of McBeth's teaching article is devoted to description, with helpful visuals, of his approach—how points are earned/accrued for various assignments and how his feedback to evolving student texts is affected by the grading scheme. He also provides useful contrasts between his own system and the more traditional grading scheme used in writing classes, explaining how his course structure makes rewards (or lack thereof) for student effort and attention transparent. He concludes by providing some quotations from student portfolio letters in which they explain that despite some initial frustration with how much was demanded of them, they now realize what it takes to be a “good writer,” a lesson that will serve them well going forward. McBeth's paper provides both a thoughtful and engaging rationale for his approach and a clear, practical description of how to implement it. This article should give writing teachers food for thought and ideas for immediate application.

Our third article, also a teaching piece that focuses on student revision, is by Elena Shvidko and entitled “Beyond ‘Giver-Receiver’ Relationships: Facilitating an Interactive Revision Process.” Shvidko describes a “Letter to the Reviewer” assignment, submitted by students along with their drafts of their paper, in which students identify strengths and weaknesses of the text-in-progress and ask the reviewer questions about which they would like feedback. Shvidko notes the symbiotic relationship between effective feedback processes and student reflection: “writing teachers should not only strive at providing useful feedback, but they should also teach students to efficiently respond to this feedback.” She argues that assignments such as the Letter to the Reviewer promote metacognition, which has been demonstrated to benefit student writing/writers, and they improve the feedback-and-revision cycle, making feedback a two-way collaborative interaction rather than the more typical unidirectional (teacher→student) exchange.

Shvidko then reports on a small action research study she conducted with her two first-year composition classes in the U.S., in which she implemented the Letter to the Reviewer (adapted from Sommers, 2013) with her students. Students wrote Letters to the Reviewer before receiving peer or teacher feedback on their drafts. Students were given clear prompts for these letters, and the letter technique was modeled (examples are given in the article).

Shvidko discusses themes from the student data she collected (the letters themselves and student comments on course evaluations) along with her own reflections and observations as the classroom teacher. She reports many clear benefits to the technique that she could identify—from improved student motivation to students being better prepared for teacher-student conferences among others—and encourages other teachers to try the approach. As with McBeth's paper, Shvidko provides such a clear description of how she implemented the technique that other teachers could easily apply or adapt it to their own contexts.

Our final piece in this issue is a book review by Kendon Kurzer, discussing a recently published edited collection on peer review, *Peer Pressure, Peer Power: Theory and Practice in Peer Review and Response for the Writing Classroom* (Corbett, LaFrance, & Decker, Eds., 2014). There has not been much new research and scholarship produced in recent years on this ubiquitous response practice, so we are delighted to inform our readers about this new contribution to the literature.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and we encourage readers to share the journal with colleagues and students and to submit papers for our Vol. II (2016) issues!

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