

Manuscript Draft

Formative Feedback and Teaching of Research Writing: From Practice to Research

Supporting Information

Institutional Description

Writing, Research, and Discourse Studies (WRDS), where all three co-authors work, is part of the School of Journalism, Writing, and Media at the University of British Columbia, Canada. WRDS is an undergraduate program created in 2008-09, offering courses in academic writing that introduce students to discourse in the disciplines and to public and community forms of knowledge-making. The unit has become a centre for innovation in pedagogies of writing and discourse studies, contributing to the scholarship of teaching and learning in these areas.

This project started from an internal need of developing assessment resources for continuing and new instructors. In its initial, unit-focused iteration we began by collecting samples of student writing and asking instructors to provide feedback on some of those samples. We produced internal professional development resources on the basis of this first phase of the investigation. The project has since broadened outward and, with research ethics approval, we have conducted, transcribed, and coded interviews with six instructors from our unit. We analyze these interviews in this paper.

Key Theoretical Frames

Semi-structured or qualitative interviews: Our project gathers data from qualitative interviews with instructors. This methodology ensures that the interactional exchange of dialogue between researchers and interviewees creates meanings and understandings for all of those involved. Semi-structured interviews have a relatively informal style, they are a "conversation with purpose." In our project, we asked each instructor a set of pre-set questions with a semi-structured setup and we also deviated from those questions where this appeared useful and interesting.

Grounded theory and qualitative coding

Rhetorical genre theory and genre-based pedagogy

Glossary

Scaffolding: The intentional structuring of a course's lectures, activities, and assignments to lead students from the more foundational to the more complex work that is required in producing larger assignments. In the case of this study, the scaffolded movement through connected assignments includes researching and reading, note-taking and summarizing, drafting, providing and receiving peer feedback, revising, and preparing for final submission. Regarding feedback practices in this process, "dialogic feed forward" is part of course scaffolding where feedback influences upcoming assignments or provides specific direction to be applied in future work.

Feedback: Not merely an assessment but also a primary way of interaction between the instructor and students in the ongoing learning process of writing. We explore two main kinds of feedback: formative and summative. Frequent formative feedback aims to engage students in the ongoing writing process so they can improve their writing in the future. Summative feedback is a one-time high-stakes assessment, usually given to students at the end of a course to indicate the extent they have succeeded in meeting the assignment objectives. When instructors provide formative feedback, feedback acts as a form of scaffolding that encourages students to take responsibility for both their writing and their development as legitimate authors.

Dialogism: A dynamic relationship that advances over time, moving from the hierarchical expert (the instructor) and novice (students) relationship to a more cooperative one. In a dialogic perspective, writing is seen as a process, a collaborative practice that happens through interaction. In a dialogic conception, the instructor acts as a mediator by making revision comments in the role of "the other."

Think-aloud protocol: A strategy used by professional writers and writing instructors that encourages expression of the reader's process of meaning-making while reading a text. The reader reports out loud what is happening in their mind while reading a text, which gives the writer the opportunity to observe the reader's meaning-making process and reaction (in this case, for the purpose of review and revision).

Metalanguage: Metalanguage is a broad term for the range of vocabulary—which can be more or less technical—that is used to describe aspects and language features of particular texts in situations where these texts are analyzed, produced, and used. In the context of teaching writing, metalanguage includes linguistic-pragmatic, functional-grammatical, genre-theoretical, or rhetorical-literary terms and descriptions that instructors offer students when describing assignments, presenting model texts, and providing feedback.

Introduction

Internationally, research on writing pedagogy has long concerned itself with questions of how to respond to students' writing. Should instructors use rubrics, write comments in the margins, provide summary assessment at the bottom of an assignment? How detailed should feedback comments be, and how structured? What intentions do the comments pursue and how can instructors ensure that students recognize those intentions? When the writing of feedback comments is attended by detailed decisions about grades, this combination opens up many critical questions about the intention of instructors' comments: what is their function in light of the process of grading? What are instructors looking for, how are they prioritizing what to provide feedback on, what phrases do they decide to use, and what aims do they pursue with these phrases?

The intersection of feedback and assessment has given rise to a wide range of research, from examining the role of grammar and error in assessment (Lee, 2019; Myhill et al., 2013), to advocating genre-based pedagogy and commenting on typical genre elements (Artemeva & Freedman, 2016; Driscoll et al., 2020; Hyland, 2007; Yu, 2021), to analyzing the use of metalanguage in instructor training and written feedback (Schleppegrell, 2013; Thieme, 2019), to studying students' reflections on the process of writing and its products (Ballenger & Myers, 2019; Hill & West, 2020). The benefits of ongoing feedback—students' dialogic interaction with instructors as well as with peers—have become central to these pedagogical discussions (Bakhtin, 1981; Carless et al., 2011; Faraco, 2009; Matusov, 2004; Yu, 2021). Attention to feedback takes a key role in alternative approaches to grading as well, including the practices of ungrading and labour-based grading (Blum et al., 2020; Carillo, 2021; Clark & Talbert, 2023; Gaudet, 2022; Inoue, 2019). While feedback in these alternative approaches is less concerned with assessment, it also searches for and chooses from among a range of possible aims, moments, and phrases when providing comments on students' work. In all cases of feedback practice, open questions remain about how to ensure that the choices made in giving feedback and the forms in which it is provided serve students' agency in their writing development and as novice researchers.

How do instructors reach towards student authors in the commentary they leave on various assignments? As Mary Scott and Kelly Coate note, it is important that we consider feedback not simply as an assessment but also as “one of the primary forms of interaction between our students and us” (Scott & Coate, 2003, p. 98). Alongside the pressures of assessment, a wealth of considerations may shape how instructors as readers comment to students as authors. The range of

these considerations can create an overly crowded space—crowded with past and present teaching experiences, full of language observations and genre expectations, packed with commitments including to equity and fairness, brimming with thoughts, feelings, and anxieties. As instructors, we are inclined to professionalize the comment space to enable these exchanges, discipline our interactions, and manage our relationship with students through our choice of words, key principles, and stated goals. We are also under expectations of pedagogical professionalization and managerial discipline via our past graduate training, current professional development, and ongoing administrative oversight (Darroch et al., 2019). This project enters into this crowded space.

Our study is rooted in teaching practices at a research-focused Canadian university where courses on research writing at the first-year level function as requirements for various programs, from social sciences to performing arts, from natural to applied sciences. These courses usually examine academic writing in a multi-generic and multi-disciplinary way. All three co-authors work in the unit called Writing, Research, and Discourse Studies (WRDS), part of the School of Journalism, Writing, and Media at the University of British Columbia, Canada. WRDS is an undergraduate program created in 2008-09 that offers courses in academic research and writing and introduces students to discourse and knowledge-making practices in the disciplines. The unit has become a centre for innovation in the development of undergraduate writing curriculum development and of scholarship of teaching and learning in the area of writing and discourse studies (Thieme, 2019, 2022). Our project looks at both the training and pedagogical principles that instructors draw on when they teach courses on research writing and the key principles that guide practices of providing feedback on student writing. We conducted semi-structured, qualitative interviews with six instructors where we asked questions about their training and about the guiding principles in their written feedback. Which aspects of their past and ongoing experiences of professionalization, research, and teaching are at the forefront of their minds when writing comments on students' work?

Our analysis highlights the formative elements of these instructors' approaches to feedback and the extent to which they link their practice to scholarship in writing studies, applied linguistics, and educational studies. In that context, we examine whether faculty's teaching and feedback practices consider the role of metalanguage, what their approach is to scaffolding written assignments, and how they structure dialogic interaction throughout the course. We conclude with suggestions for the future of writing studies practice and the training of instructors.

What Research on Feedback Suggests

From the research literature, we know that students benefit most from receiving frequent formative feedback that helps them to improve their writing in the future, rather than hearing justifications for their grade in a summative assessment at the end of a project or course. Yet many studies show that it is challenging to make this formative feedback meaningful to students. First, a good number of students simply do not read feedback, especially on summative assessments late in the term (where, ironically, faculty often spend the most time). For example, Mensink and King (2020) find that when feedback was returned in one file but the grade appeared elsewhere in the learning management system, 42% of feedback files went unopened. At the same time, Li and De Luca's (2014) work on assessment feedback suggests that while students want to apply feedback from one assignment to future assignments, they are often “unclear” on how to do so.

In response to this challenge, some faculty design interventions that require students to read and apply feedback between assignments. Yet this promising approach can also have the effect of limiting student agency with regard to their own writing when it pressures students into accepting suggestions made by instructors. David Nicol and Debra Macfarlane-Dick point out that—despite the persistent emphasis on student-centered learning in contemporary pedagogy—formative feedback is “still largely controlled by and seen as the responsibility of teachers” and is also “generally conceptualized as a transmission process” (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p. 200). Put simply, faculty often just tell students what to change, without inviting significant reflection, critical engagement, or even pushback.

One commonly cited strategy for developing genuine agency in students is the “dialogic model for feedback,” defined by David Carless et al. as an interactive exchange in which “interpretations are shared, meanings negotiated and expectations clarified” (Carless et al., 2011, p. 397). As Rupert Wegerif explains, the term “dialogic” refers to how meaning is created in spoken and written discourse and to the openness of utterances which endeavour to cross the boundary between self and other while not effacing the difference between self and other (Wegerif, 2006). In both Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) and Lev Vygotsky's (1978) theories, dialogism and otherness are important concepts for understanding language usage (Bakhtin, 1981; Magalhães & Oliveira, 2011). Thus, Morton et al. (2014) propose a conceptualization of dialogic feedback drawing on Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development and Bakhtin's theory of dialogism: a dynamic relationship that advances over time, moving from the hierarchical expert/novice relationship to a more cooperative one (Morton

et al., 2014). In this sense, feedback is "a form of scaffolding that encourages the student to ultimately take greater responsibility for their writing and their development as legitimate authors in their disciplines" (Morton et al., 2014, p. A25). Such a practice promotes students' process of becoming full members of disciplinary communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). At the same time, feedback is seen as a "point of intertextual engagement through which textual authority, ownership and authorship are negotiated between the instructor and student over time" (Morton et al., 2014, p. A25).

Such a dialogic feedback approach typically includes written feedback in the context of ongoing discussion between instructors and students, either synchronously (face-to-face or via electronic meeting) or asynchronously (written exchange). In such discussions, students are prompted to reflect on what the feedback received means for the continuing development of their work. This "dialogic feed forward" is part of course scaffolding where feedback "impacts upon an upcoming assignment, or is given post-assignment with specific direction on how it can be applied to future assignments" (Hill & West, 2020, p. 84). To learn from feedback, students should be supported in the development of an empowering mindset of "proactive recipience" (Winstone et al., 2017) so they can actively engage in the feedback process. A dialogic approach helps students to engage with feedback, criteria, and expectations, "supporting them in developing enhanced ownership of assessment processes" (Carless et al., 2011, p. 397).

Experiments with a dialogic feedback model show somewhat mixed results but nevertheless provide valuable lessons. In a study which involved meeting with students to discuss their essay draft, Jennifer Hill and Harry West report that students felt more confident in handling difficult emotions around critique and revision, found the process empowering, and expressed keenness to engage with feedback in the future (Hill & West, 2020, p. 87). Bloxham and Campbell experimented with "interactive cover sheets" where students indicated what questions they had and what they would most like feedback on. Instructors found that these questions helped them save time and direct their feedback, but students had trouble formulating the questions as they did not know what they needed or wanted support on and tended to fall back on technical aspects like "referencing or assignment layout" (297). The researchers suggest that helping to bring students into the "community of practice" beforehand might make this strategy more fruitful (298).

In this context, self-regulated learning can serve as a framework for encouraging students to articulate and pursue their broader needs and deeper intentions as regards writing assignments,

beyond correct referencing and document layout. Paul Orsmond et al. highlight that self-regulation is key to students' ability to use feedback in order to "recognise the strengths and weaknesses of their own work and thus to identify areas for further development/learning" (Orsmond et al., 2013, p. 241). Encouraging students to assert agency over the feedback they receive is also assisted by face-to-face conversations like the ones described in Hill and West and by structuring the process of providing feedback via "think-aloud protocol" as Janet Giltrow et al. do (Giltrow et al., 2021; Hill & West, 2020).

While researchers continue to develop strategies for implementing dialogic feedback, the potential pedagogical and developmental value of this approach seems clear. Rather than simply telling students what to change and seeing if they change it—what Boud and Molloy call a "detectable outcome in performance" (Boud & Molloy, 2013, p. 702)—a dialogic model allows students to share their own goals for the assignment and discuss how they might use (or not use) feedback information to achieve those aims. It supports habits of self-regulated learning in that it provides students' room not only to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of their own work but also to choose areas for further development (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). It invites students to better understand why particular rhetorical features, genre moves, or writing choices might be useful for their purposes (Thieme, 2022)—and to push back on revisions that do not feel authentic to their own research or writing goals.

While many instructors understand the principles of dialogism in theory, it is more difficult to act on them. Haughney et al. find that faculty are often unsure how to align "sound feedback practices" with the "realities of implementation" (REF). Meanwhile, David Boud and Phillip Dawson observe that the most challenging aspect for faculty is "the tension between workload and a desire for effective feedback" (Boud & Dawson, 2023, p. 164). In the context of large class sizes, large teaching loads, and precarious labour conditions which are all too common in writing studies, putting theory into practice may be difficult when it comes to formative feedback.

A practical question presents itself: given these barriers, how do instructors write feedback that students will read, understand, and engage with? Notably, this is a question that persists across both more traditional grading and ungrading or labour-based approaches, which are all committed to providing feedback in some form. In this project, we were curious to learn how faculty in our unit tackle these barriers at present. What training, what research, what theories do they draw on in providing formative feedback? What principles do they keep in mind? What efforts do they make to

connect feedback to students' agency? And how does all of this play out in practice against high workloads and multiple professional demands?

Method

This study gathered data from semi-structured, qualitative interviews conducted with six instructors who each have taught, for several years, a first-year course on research writing that is offered across several university programs (WRDS 150: Writing and Research in the Disciplines). As shown in Table 1, the six faculty members whom we interviewed had at that time worked in our unit between four years and fifteen years. They had gained a good understanding of the range of approaches to writing instruction within WRDS. They could also comment on how those approaches compared to other institutions and programs. Of the six instructors, three had studied rhetoric, writing, or genre studies during their graduate education and the other three were more exclusively trained in literary studies in English.

Table 1. Demographic information of the six instructors who participated in the study.

Instructor's initials	Year of Ph.D.	Dept. of Ph.D.	Country of Ph.D.	Start year in WRDS	Training and experience in writing studies approaches
AB (pseudonym)	2006	English	Canada	2009	Has been teaching writing studies since 1995; worked in a writing centre; taught introduction to academic writing since 1998 as TA, then as sessional instructor. In 2003, assistant professor with courses in writing studies, rhetoric, discourse studies; co-developed program in Writing, Rhetoric and Discourse Studies at another university.
CB	2010	English	Canada	2019	From 2003 to 2008, TA for intro-level English courses which fulfill writing requirements; instructor in English departments 2009-10 and 2012-19 for intro-level, writing-requirement courses. In 2011, taught TOEFL-focused writing at middle school level at a private academy in South Korea.

LF	2011	English	Canada	2010	Graduate training in literary analysis; teaching and research development in genre analysis; pedagogical specialization in universal design and inclusive design for learning.
MS	2016	Communication	US	2018	Masters in English, rhetoric, and composition. Taught writing and communication, rhetoric, media studies, and business communication in colleges and research-focused universities.
KM	2014	English	South Africa	2018	Undergraduate and graduate training in literature and cultural studies; worked as a TA, lecturer, and then as a senior lecturer in South Africa teaching undergraduate English courses to Arts students and critical thinking and academic writing to engineering and built environment students before moving to Canada.
KT	2007	English	Canada	2008	Graduate training in literary studies, linguistics, and genre theory; as a graduate student worked as TA for a leading writing studies and as RA and guest teacher for a rhetoric scholar. In 2005, began teaching writing studies courses as a sessional instructor in an English department.

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In the interviews, we asked each instructor a set of open-ended questions that worked as a guide to the interaction (see Appendix A) and also deviated from those questions where this appeared useful and interesting. The interviews were conducted by the three co-authors via the online platform Zoom, the audio files were recorded and later transcribed with the help of the application Otter.ai. As in most qualitative research, the knowledge produced in interviews is situated and contextual and originates from the interactional exchange between researchers and interviewees, creating space for the co-construction of meanings and understandings (Mason, 2002). Semi-structured qualitative interviews have a relatively informal style and are considered a "conversation with purpose"

(Burgess, 1984). Although we, as interviewees, had topics or issues we wished to cover and a set of starting points for discussion, the structure of our interviews were fluid and flexible, allowing the development of unexpected themes and the capture of instructors' multiple perspectives.

After analyzing the transcripts of the interviews—writing comments and identifying emerging themes—we worked together and discussed overlaps in the themes across the six interviews, developing four key themes for coding purposes. We then manually coded each interview and collected the coded data on spreadsheets organized by theme. In other words, we applied a grounded theory approach in which data collection and analysis are interconnected (Saldaña, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The use of grounded theory required us to engage in a recurrent analytic process of coding, comparison, and categorization of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Our themes emerged from the questions asked and responses given in interviews, rather than from predetermined codes or categories that would require "fitting" the data to them (Cresswell, 2015). The four major themes that emerged from our analysis are: (1) key principles used by instructor for providing feedback; (2) instructor's training and learning on the job; (3) the dialogic nature of feedback; and (4) instructor's well-being and embodiment in the process of providing feedback. Our discussion below is structured according to these themes; each section addresses relevant quotes and expressions from across all our six interviewees.

What Our Analysis Suggests

I. About Training and Learning on the Job

Instructors' own student experience of how they received feedback on written assignments was brought up in four of the six interviews—in both negatively and positively motivating ways. To begin with the more negative framing, one instructor described how her approach to commenting extensively on student papers was formed against her own frustration at not receiving enough feedback from her instructors. Another characterized his pedagogical principles as having been shaped in opposition to his bad experiences as a student: "Almost all of my pedagogical practice is in relation to how shitty most of my teachers were" (MS). Pedagogical approaches can emerge in significant part as a counter to disappointing experiences instructors had as students. This relationship between an instructor's personal experience and professional practice is, in a way,

dialogic and a sense of "otherness" is implied in the relationship between instructors' personal past and professional present.

In terms of positive experiences, instructors highlighted precise pedagogical practices of their own professors. They often described outstanding moments with individual teachers who responded to their work so effectively that this experience continued to guide them when they began teaching. For instance, one instructor spoke of being given "direct and blunt" feedback by one professor, which worked so well for him that now he tries to "combine a directness and at times a bluntness with a good amount of constructive criticism" (CB). Another instructor reported having one professor who responded unlike all others: "I've never had an instructor do that to me before. And so I was really impressed with the amount of feedback that I got" (MS). It made him realize, with a bit of surprise, that "oh, she's actually helping me make my argument" and that experience was "really big, like a revelation." A third one of our instructors remembered how one professor in her graduate program offered phrases and questions to consider, how that felt like an invitation to use and adopt these suggestions, "to pick up on that and expand on it" (LF). She now suggests such expressions to her own students: "I say, you're welcome to use these. So here's what I think you're saying. And I might even give them a little phrase to use." Based on these instructors' reflections, we suggest that helping a student to make their argument and offering phrases they can use invites students to enter disciplinary discourses through a dialogic process.

Of the six instructors, the three whose graduate work was predominantly in literary studies noted that they received no formal training in providing feedback. They began developing their approaches to giving feedback on the job while they worked as teaching assistants for literary studies courses. One of these instructors starkly described the experience as being "just thrown into the deep end" (KM). Another mentioned moderated marking sessions with other teaching assistants as a way of figuring out how to provide commentary on student work. When they began working as instructors of record, one of these colleagues found it helpful to be asked to work very closely with a more experienced instructor who needed assistance due to an injury and using this situation to "immerse [herself] more fully in this approach" (LF). Another instructor was responsible for a group of teaching assistants and through "team grading and team moderation" got insight into "how others graded and where there could have been more feedback, less feedback" (KM).

The other three instructors had more exposure to writing studies and writing pedagogy as graduate students. One of them had been trained as a tutor in writing centers at two universities where they

had learned how to structure oral and one-on-one feedback in a way that was free of assessment. In those settings, they learned to use the "think-aloud protocol"—described in Janet Giltrow's textbook *Academic Writing*—and they continue to use that approach in their teaching (AB). Another had taken a practicum in composition and teaching of rhetoric, though he critiqued that this practicum was mainly theoretical and did not provide enough hands-on experience (MS). And a third had worked as a teaching assistant with a leading writing studies scholar, a context in which she learned to adopt a student-centered approach to providing feedback (KT).

Several, but not all the instructors, made reference to research discussions—either from their readings in relevant fields or from their own active research—as part of the ongoing development of their feedback practice. Among the research topics that were described as helpful were disability studies, diversity and inclusion initiatives, self-regulated learning, metalanguage, student peer review, English for academic purposes, pragmatic linguistics (incl. relevance, coherence, cohesion), analysis of functional grammar, student-centered teaching, and research on international students and their feedback expectations. In three of the six interviews instructors mentioned how they had been positively influenced by research on think-aloud protocol, an approach that is described in some detail in all editions of Giltrow's *Academic Writing*, a textbook that has played an instrumental role in the history of our unit. On a less productive note, one instructor found that some of the research he read on assessment was problematic and predominantly quantitative, unsuited for his pedagogical purposes.

Some instructors also referred to their own active research as shaping their feedback practices. AB reported on analyzing their own comments on student papers for verbs which did or did not position students as novice researchers, critically assessing the ways in which their commentary encouraged students' identification with research culture. LF mentioned participating in a project on self-regulated learning in which she could bring her experience in providing think-aloud feedback to bear, noting that "think-aloud works so well with self regulated learning, because in me talking through my own process of understanding, and in integrating the metalanguage of the course, in my own feedback, it really is empowering [students] as well to recognize those processes." KT mentioned her research on metalanguage, emanating from the need to teach students language to name things so that writing studies teaching can become more effective at integrating that language into the way the course analyzes text.

II. About Key Principles for Providing Feedback

Across our interviews, an overarching principle among instructors is their focus on genre expectations and their effort to develop students' use of the genre elements that are relevant for each assignment. This principle was expressed in different ways, depending on instructor training and preferences. It is worth noting the range of practices with which this principle operates. Some of the more detailed decisions can mean that while the principle is shared between instructors, their specific habits of instantiating it might be in opposition to each other. For instance, some instructors speak against commenting on traditional aspects of grammar while others see grammar correction as part of an overarching genre-based approach. Or, while some instructors advocate for feedback which emerges from the individual instructor's meaning-making effort in the moment of reading each student's particular paper, others rely on an archive of their past commentary from which they choose to paste pre-written comments into students' assignments.

Several instructors highlighted the benefits of the think-aloud protocol in composing their feedback comments. Those benefits are linked to certain key principles of genre-based pedagogy. AB explained that their use of the think-aloud approach focuses feedback on both situated genre expectations and the reader's cognitive effort in the process of meaning-making (EXAMPLE). In that spirit, they do not correct grammar but rather point out where they stumble in making meaning with the student's text and what stylistic suggestions they have as a scholarly reader. LF, also an advocate of think-aloud protocol when providing feedback, emphasizes that when narrating her process of meaning-making, her comments are meant to serve students' meta-awareness about writing. She ensures that she employs analytical terms from the course and keeps the course's learning objectives and assignment guidelines in mind when phrasing her comments. She notes that she strives to comment as a mentor to students' writing, not as someone who corrects them; in other words, she avoids a deficit understanding of students' writing.

Two of the instructors in our study have each collected a library of some of their previous comments and use this compilation to cut and paste responses in the margins of student assignments. In the words of one of these instructors, the comments incorporate the language learnt in the course (e.g., about rhetorical moves in particular genres) and he revises the comment library as he makes adjustments to his instructions (QUOTE). He keeps a specific document with comments for each separate assignment so as to ensure that the comments are attuned to both the genre of the assignment and the instructions students have received by that point in the course. Students are

given access to these files in advance of assignment submission. The other instructor emphasized that his use of a comment bank is rooted in his pedagogy's emphasis on practice: students' writing improves through repeated practice. In that spirit, comments repeat as well—he sees the use of the comment bank in the service of making his feedback more consistent and less arbitrary: the same issues in student assignments will draw the same comments.

A shared principle across instructor interviews was that feedback is not correction and should reflect the thinking behind the suggestions given. Several instructors highlighted the use of metalanguage in that process—to identify what students are doing by giving names to particular genre moves and language features and to use those names when providing recommendations for how students can improve how they make their genre moves. One instructor emphasized that, for that purpose, she aims to provide three types of feedback: (1) comments on clarity, (2) comments on how scholarly moves and genre features are visible and can be better signaled, and (3) comments on the arguments that are made and the evidence that is provided for them (KM). She is also concerned about fairness in these exchanges and checks students' assignments later in the term against feedback she has given on their earlier submissions so that she does not suddenly raise issues that have not been commented on before. Another instructor noted that she avoids correction and instead focuses on the value of her feedback in places where students have choices, where they can vary their expression according to their intentions (KT). She has students look at the structure of good papers, give names to their features, and encourages them to try out these structures and features. These interactions with students evolve over the course of the term such that summative feedback on the final assignment becomes an act of recognition—the instructor recognizes what students are doing in their writing and students recognize the instructor's response to it.

III. About the Dialogic Nature of Feedback

In response to our interview questions, instructors commented on their efforts to be in dialogue with students about the design of students' projects and the choices in their writing. Through scaffolded elements of these courses, students have in-built incentives to return to and further consider previous comments they have received. These incentives are heightened when instructors build engagement with previous comments into the activities and assignments of the course. In our interviews, several instructors spoke about how they attempt to link back to previous comments through in-class activities or take-home assignments—e.g., by giving time in class to the task of integrating peer review feedback, by asking students to write reflections on the feedback they

received, by referring to previous comments in feedback on newer assignments, or by repasting previous feedback into subsequent assignments to insist on it being addressed. We want to note, however, that making this kind of return to previous instructor comments part of the assignment structure, and part of grading also asserts pressure and may produce compliance over engagement.

Some of the interviews described instructors' efforts to use feedback to position students for future work. AB emphasized their effort that feedback comments speak to students as "novice researchers" and reflected on a shift in tone they observed in their comments, where some comments were written in a teacherly voice to provide more direction and others attempt to engage with students as fellow, albeit novice, researchers. LF spoke of the experience of "co-constructing meaning" together with students when she engages with their work in her feedback comments. She also thinks about "what students need to move forward" when she composes her commentary. Likewise, KM focuses on small steps that students can take to continue their work on the project or to push them more significantly when they appear ready for that. Or, when students produce a sequence of component assignments in groups, they each time receive that feedback as a group and are necessarily in conversation with each other about its meaning as well as what they should do in response to it. There is a dialogic aspect to these conversations as, potentially, they require the group to chart their own direction, in contrast to a more hierarchical experience of following an instructor's instructions. Similarly, KT spoke of using feedback to help students develop their projects in their own directions, including beyond the course by encouraging them to think of taking the project to a conference.

IV. About Well-Being and Embodiment

[STILL TO BE WRITTEN]

Everything Together with Theoretical Framing

The discussions in these interviews illustrate a need to improve training for graduate students and new instructors as regards both writing studies approaches and strategies for providing written feedback. Most of the instructors have learned how to give feedback on the job, without explicit training. Some of the instructors' practices arose from either positive or negative experiences of receiving feedback as students. While drawing on one's own experiences as a student is part of every instructor's practice, it is also a very limited way of shaping that practice if it is not combined with wider-ranging and more systematic pedagogical training. Several instructors in this study

mentioned being mentored and learning from ongoing conversations with experienced teachers once they started teaching. It helps instructional practice if these mentoring relationships can take more permanent and sustained forms and not be left to individual initiative. Ideally, these conversations should reach across programs and institutions. In other words, to provide better training, it is essential for graduate students and new instructors to be able to move beyond reliance on personal experience when developing their feedback practice and to reach for an approach that is theoretically grounded and empirically supported.

We see faculty in our unit shifting their emphasis from summative to formative feedback and designing their courses in ways that allow students to work with their feedback in an iterative way. Based on our analysis, we suggest that faculty create space and time in their classes for meaningful dialogue with students. We also suggest the use of a “think-aloud” approach in written feedback, which seems more likely to lead to effective dialogue when compared to strictly instructive or prescriptive feedback. Notably, these efforts to foster more dialogue between students and instructors may also have anti-racist and social justice implications, as they help to de-center the instructor as the sole arbiter of quality writing. However, we don’t yet know to what extent that feedback is positioning the student vs. the instructor as agent. The question of power in the process of giving and receiving feedback remains to be explored.

Conclusion

[STILL TO BE WRITTEN]

Appendix A

Questions for each interview:

1. How did you arrive at your approach to feedback? How were you trained? What did you take on board along the way, from other scholars, from research?
2. Can you point us to a place in the comments that exemplifies the approach you were trained in and/or developed through your practice? For someone who has not studied this approach, how would you explain it with the help of two comments in the document?
3. What do you want or see students do with your comments? How have students in the past used the comments you gave? Have you gotten any feedback from students about how they engage with the comments?
4. What do you do to encourage students to engage with the feedback? Have you prompted students to work with comments in a certain way?
5. How do you select what you comment on? Do you have key principles in mind?
6. Do you have different categories of comments in mind, and do you try to balance, for instance between praise, correction, direct edits, question...?
7. What do you do if someone has many grammatical mistakes? What is your approach to marking grammar more generally?
8. What are the precise benefits and drawbacks for you in using the technology you use for giving feedback?
9. What key things about providing feedback would you say to an instructor who is new to WRDS (or to your specific approach to feedback)?

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