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Learning to critique and revise in a peer response group in an English-as-a-foreign-language university writing class

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University of Hawaiʻi, 1994

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LEARNING TO CRITIQUE AND REVISE IN A PEER RESPONSE GROUP IN
AN ENGLISH-AS-A-FOREIGN-LANGUAGE UNIVERSITY WRITING CLASS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
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Abstract
This two-semester qualitative study consisted of four case studies of individual students from a peer response group in a university English-as-a-foreign-language expository writing class in Taiwan. It examined students' interaction and critiquing performance at group sessions, reaction to peers' comments, revisions, and changes in revision patterns, audience awareness, and attitudes toward writing. The researcher was also the teacher, and a triangulation approach to data collection and analysis was adopted.

The use of critique sheets restrained participation at peer response sessions initially. Individual traits such as defensiveness, assertiveness, or passiveness also affected the success of communication. The use of first language dramatically improved the performance of one student who had a strong fear of speaking English. Most students improved their interaction skills considerably in the second semester. When responding to texts, the students were suggestion-oriented initially, but over time they learned to preface suggestions with restatements of what the authors did and discussions of problems, and all this became more elaborate as well. Only six percent of the comments were problematic. There was a shift from a strong concern with content to a broader view of writing. For the weaker students, the improvement in the quantity and quality of
their comments did not become apparent until the second semester.

Peer group response and discussion prompted the stronger student to form more new opinions about the writing than either the one with a negative attitude toward peer response or the two weaker ones. Peer response was also more effective in helping students form new perspectives about each others’ writing than about their own. The two weaker students tended to give up ownership of their writing, while the two stronger writers acted either assertively or defensively. The former were more successful at revision than the latter. The weaker writers shifted from making surface-level revisions to making substantive ones, while the two stronger writers did not change their revision patterns. The two weaker writers’ attitude toward writing improved slightly but the others’ remained unchanged. One stronger writer and one of the weaker writers also improved their audience awareness.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

In the past ten years, peer response groups have been the subject of much research. Researchers have looked into group interaction, the nature of the comments students produce, the effects of peer response, and students' attitude toward it. Most of this research has been conducted in the first language (L1) context. In the second language (L2) context, however, only a small amount of research has been done, and the characteristics of peer response groups in this context are still largely unknown.

Statement of the Problem

In the six years the researcher taught EFL (English as a Foreign Language) at a university in Taiwan, she often heard students talking about their fear of writing English essays. Since they were learning a foreign language, they not only had problems with content and form, just like their L1 counterparts, but they were also frustrated with their inadequate command of English. Since most classes had large enrollments (classes of 40 or 50 were common), it was difficult for teachers to give individual assistance. Some teachers cut down on the number of assignments in order to allow more time to respond to papers. However, this reduced the students' opportunities to practice writing. In addition, since most teachers tended to assign individual work rather than group work, the students were more used to
competing with each other than cooperating in teams. The students did not have a supportive community to work in. They were aware of these problems and felt writing was a lonely process with few people available to help.

Writing should have been an interactive process involving several drafts, in which the writers learned about the effects of their writing from the feedback of an audience. However, in large classes teachers only have time to read the final drafts, and students do not get much, if any, feedback during the writing process. These writers are groping alone in their attempt to find the right content and form.

Another problem is that even though teachers serve as the audience, they may not be a real audience. Since they play the role of evaluators, they may be so preoccupied checking students' writing against some ideal text that is acceptable to the academic community that they do not really react to the meaning in the text. In the EFL context, many teachers are so concerned about language correctness that they mainly hunt for errors when they respond to writing. Students' voices are thus not heard. A further complication is that teachers control the grades, and this creates a threatening situation in which the writer-audience relationship is distorted.

Aware of these problems, the researcher started experimenting with peer response a few years ago. Some of
her students told her that they found it useful because they could help each other identify and solve problems. The researcher also found her time used more wisely because the students had taken care of the easier problems and she was able to assist with the harder ones. After receiving comments from their peers, the students felt they had a better idea of what their writing was like. They also felt the classroom had become less threatening because they were working with students instead of the teacher. The writing process became less lonely, and they could joke, chat, and gripe with peers as they worked.

However, groups were not always successful. The researcher noticed that when students discussed writing, some groups interacted productively but others were at a loss as to what to do. What makes a peer response group interact successfully is a complicated issue. Individual characteristics of the group members and procedures for group discussion both play important roles. Individual characteristics of group members may include differences in a student’s ability to write and critique texts, attitudes toward peer response, and ability to benefit from peer response, etc. Procedural differences in group process, such as whether critique sheets are used and whether L1 or L2 is used in communication, may also affect outcomes. Any combination of the above factors can produce a different result.
In the past, quite a few qualitative studies examined
group interaction in the L1 context, but few have been
conducted in L2. Whether L1 and L2 groups operate in the
same way remains an unanswered question. L2 students who
are studying English as a foreign language are in a
different cultural context. Students from cultures where
classrooms are teacher-centered may find it difficult to
shift to learner-centered ones (Harris & Silva, 1993).
Students who are used to competing with their peers may find
it hard to collaborate with them. In the case of Taiwan,
instruction in most educational settings consists mainly of
individual student work, and thus students have few
opportunities to work in small groups. In addition,
entrance exams required for admission to colleges and
universities encourage competition rather than collaboration
among students. Information on how groups work in such a
context will be helpful.

To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, there have
been few systematic studies of students’ interaction in peer
response groups in the L2 context. One study by Nelson and
Murphy (1992) showed that EFL college students attacked one
another in the group. More insight into how L2 groups
participate in discussion is greatly needed.

In the researcher’s own prior teaching, she was
often intrigued by the way her students critiqued writing in
groups. She observed that, since L2 writers are learning a
second language, their developing critiquing skills may be different from that of L1 writers. Scholars of comparative rhetoric have shown that each language has its unique rhetoric (Kaplan, 1988). What L2 students consider appropriate in a piece of writing may be different from what L1 students would consider acceptable. The aspects of writing that are easy or difficult for L2 students to respond to may be different from those for L1 students. In addition, the writing instruction L2 students had in their first language may also have an effect on their approaches to responding to L2 writing. L2 students have their own perceptions about the most helpful ways to perform their tasks, but these things may be perceived quite differently by their L1 counterparts (Kilborn, 1992).

Some qualitative studies about L1 students' performance in critiquing writing and its development have been conducted, but there were very few on L2 students. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, only one quantitative study, by Stanley (1988), investigated the nature of students' talk in peer response groups in a systematic way. There appears to be little qualitative research that delves into the development of students' critiquing ability.

Past research investigating students' performance in critiquing writing in groups focused on their ability to critique others' writing and largely ignored their ability to critique their own. In the literature the researcher
reviewed, only three L1 studies have been conducted on the
differences in the way students critique their own texts and
those of others (Barcelow-Hill, 1988; Greene, 1988; Bencich,
1989/1990), and the findings were contradictory. In the L2
context, there seems to be no research at all on this topic.

Some L1 studies that examined the impact of peer
response on students' critiquing ability showed that peer
response induced critical thinking (Barcelow-Hill, 1988).
Some of these studies compared students' entry and exit
level performances in critiquing writing and some analyzed
the conversation in groups. Few have compared their
performance in critiquing writing before and after peer
response sessions to measure the effects of group
discussion. In the L2 context, little research has been
conducted on this aspect.

A few studies showed that L2 learners had doubts about
their L2 proficiency and therefore had little confidence in
the feedback they received (Jacobs, 1987). Several studies
indicated that most L2 learners preferred teacher response
to peer response (Leki, 1991). Most of these studies
discussed students' feelings toward peer response, and few
looked into how L2 students actually react to peers'
comments when they decide whether to incorporate them or
not, and how they manage the issue of ownership of their
texts.
Many studies have investigated the effects of peer response on students' writing quality, audience awareness, and attitude toward writing. Researchers have tried to assess the changes in quality of writing by comparing the difference between students' entry and exit level composition scores (Benson, 1979). Some studies showed improvement (Nelson, 1989/1990), but others showed none (Putz, 1970). Since the majority of these studies were conducted in a semester or even less, the limited time span of the studies may be the reason why some groups did not show improvement. Researchers need to study the effects of peer response over a longer time span. As to students' audience awareness and attitude toward writing, many studies have shown that peer response had positive effects (Danis, 1981).

In the L2 context, there have been some quantitative studies on the effects of peer response on the quality of writing. A small number of studies (e.g., Partridge, 1981; Chaudron, 1984) compared the effects peer response had on writing quality with the effects of teacher response and self response. As far as the researcher knows, there is little qualitative research concerning the quality of the revisions L2 college students make in response to peers' suggestions or the changes in their revision patterns. One study did look into the changes in college students'
audience awareness or attitudes toward writing (Partridge 1981; Urzua 1987). More L2 studies are needed.

**Theoretical Background**

First language research concerning group interaction at peer response sessions showed that groups had different personalities (Danis, 1980). Some groups seemed to interact positively by being supportive (Danis, 1980), while others suffered from interpersonal conflicts (Tebo-Messina, 1987/1988). In the L2 context, Nelson and Murphy’s (1992) university students attacked one another in the group, while some of Jacobs’ (1989) acted passively. Concerning the changes in interaction over time, L1 research showed that the changes were mostly positive. In many groups, the atmosphere became increasingly more conducive to collaboration, as indicated by students’ growing involvement with group activities and the writing process (David, 1986).

First language research that investigated the nature of students’ talk in peer response groups showed that students responded to all levels of the discourse, with a particular emphasis on content (Danis, 1982). When they responded to texts, their language performed many functions such as praising, analyzing problems, offering suggestions, etc. When they received comments, their language was used to acknowledge comments, show agreement or disagreement, or explain their writing (Benesch, 1985/1986). In the L2
context, one study by Stanley (1988) showed similar findings.

Research has shown that students' performance in critiquing writing changed over time, and the changes were all very positive. Students became more competent in responding. Audience awareness increased (Liner, 1984), and discourse concerns moved from surface levels to global levels (Coleman, 1984). Comments became more elaborate, specific, and varied (Ritchie, 1983). Students changed from being able to reflect writing back to the writer to being able to offer solutions to problems (Ziv, 1983).

Regarding the effects of peer feedback on students' ability to critique their own texts and those of their peers, the three L1 studies that have been conducted (Barcelow-Hill, 1988; Greene, 1988; Bencich, 1989/1990) produced contradictory results. One showed that the ability to respond to work written by others corresponded to one's ability to respond to one's own writing (Bencich, 1989/1990). Two studies showed peer response to be less effective in helping students diagnose their own writing problems than those of their peers (Barcelow-Hill, 1988; Greene, 1988).

As for how students react to peers' comments at revisions and how they handle the issue of ownership of their texts, L1 research showed mixed findings. Many researchers showed that students used their peers'
suggestions (Liner, 1984). A few studies showed individual differences, with some students following suggestions very compliantly, others rejecting suggestions blindly, and still others revising completely on their own (Berkenkotter, 1984).

First language research into the effects of peer response showed that it enhanced students' critiquing ability (Barcelow-Hill, 1988), strengthened writing and audience awareness (Nystrand, 1986), encouraged revising (Holley, 1990/1991), and promoted positive attitudes toward writing (Liner, 1984). However, some research has also shown that peer response could fail to improve writing since students did not have critiquing or revising ability ((Putz, 1970; Rubin, 1983). In the L2 setting, the few studies that compared peer response with teacher response showed mixed findings, with indications that the former was less effective than the latter in general (Partridge, 1981). A very small number of L2 studies showed that peer response improved audience awareness and attitude toward writing (Partridge, 1981).

The majority of the studies mentioned above involved L1 groups. Much research is needed to study L2 groups, since the different linguistic and cultural backgrounds involved may affect the learning process.
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to shed light on how L2 peer response groups work. Findings from this study may provide L2 teachers with insights into the benefits and challenges posed by peer response. Based on the above literature about peer response groups, the following research questions were formed for this study.

1. How do L2 students interact in peer response groups? What affects their interaction? What are the changes in interaction over time?

2. How do L2 students critique texts? What is the nature of the comments they make? What are the changes in their performance over time? What are the differences between the development of L2 students' ability to critique their own texts and those of their peers?

3. What impact does group discussion have on students' views about the texts being discussed?

4. How do L2 students' react to peers' comments? What are their attitudes toward ownership of their writing?

5. What is the quality of students' revisions made in response to peers' suggestions? What are the changes in their revision patterns, audience awareness, and attitudes towards writing?

Design of the Study

The participants were four EFL students enrolled in a two-semester sophomore composition course in 1992 in a
university in Taiwan. They had little prior experience with peer response. The course was conducted as a workshop which mainly focused on expository writing. The students received peer feedback on their first drafts; using this feedback, they wrote their second drafts. Throughout the two semesters, the researcher modeled responding through written feedback and teacher-student conferences on second drafts.

This study consisted of four case studies of individual students from one peer response group. It was a participant-observer study, in which the researcher was also the teacher. This dual role allowed her to observe the students closely in a natural setting with the opportunity to collect a wide variety of data. Using the triangulation approach to data collection and analysis used by qualitative researchers (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983), the researcher collected data over two semesters from tape-recorded peer response sessions, interviews, and one focus group discussion. Critique sheets, students' learning logs, writing samples, the researcher's field notes, and a questionnaire also provided data.

Significance of the Study

This study should contribute to the understanding of peer response groups in several ways. The researcher wished to describe how Chinese EFL students interacted in a peer response group over a period of two semesters. She intended to shed light on how L2 students responded to texts, how the
group discussion impacted on their thinking about the texts, and how their performance changed over time. It was hoped that this study would provide more insights on the differences in the way students critiqued their own texts and those of their peers. The researcher further wished to show how students reacted to their peers' suggestions and handled the issue of ownership of their texts. In an attempt to assess the value of peer response on the improvement of writing quality more accurately, the present study spanned an entire academic year—longer than the duration of most previous studies. This study also examined the changes in students' audience awareness, revision patterns, and attitude toward writing, in the hope of drawing a fuller picture of their growth as writers.
Chapter 2
Review of the Literature

This literature review contains seven sections: (a) theories behind collaborative learning, (b) students' performance in critiquing writing and its development, (c) differences between students' ability to critique their own texts and their ability to critique others', (d) students' interaction in groups and its development, (e) students' use of peer response and their attitude toward it, (f) effects of peer response on students' learning of writing, and (g) similarities and differences between L1 and L2 peer response groups.

Theoretical Background for Collaborative Learning

In the past few years writing teachers have experimented with peer response. The theory underlying peer response can be traced back to Vygotsky (1978), who believed in the social origin of learning. He proposed the concept of the "zone of proximal development," i.e.,

the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p.86).

He claimed that an expert or more knowledgeable peer initially guides a learner's learning, and gradually the two begin to share the problem-solving functions with the former helping the latter, until finally the learner takes over the
learning (Brown & Ferrara, 1985). According to this view, interaction with others is central to furthering learning.

Other theorists have proposed similar concepts. Bruner (1978) used the term "scaffolding" to mean guided participation in joint activities in which more able partners help students assimilate new ideas. Such activities promote cognitive development and the use of critical thinking strategies (Bayer, 1990). Piaget (1959) also believed in the benefits of having learners interact with others. He claimed that such interaction can be the source of cognitive conflict which can lead learners to reexamine and adjust the frameworks through which they view the world. According to Barnes and Todd (1978) and Forman and Cazden (1985), such conflict causes individual cognitive reorganization. In a similar vein, Bruffee (1984) argued that knowledge is not a static given but socially justified, evolving as communities of knowledgeable peers interact and thus shape and extend one another's ideas.

In a similar way, Barnes (1976) and Britton (Barnes et al., 1990) argued for the value of exploratory talk in peer groups for learning. Language plays an essential role in peer interaction since it is the medium through which negotiation of meaning occurs. According to Barnes (1976), much of the verbal interaction is expressive language, allowing the learners to freely express thoughts, feelings, and opinions, which is a beginning point for assimilating
and accommodating new knowledge. Britton et al. (1975) also claimed that expressive language is the basis for the development of language and thinking. According to them, learners in an educational setting work out the meanings of the concepts being learned through expressive language. Such language gradually moves into transactional language, which provides the necessary foundation for school-related tasks.

**Students' Performance in Critiquing Writing**

To study the effects of peer response, an understanding of students' performance in critiquing writing will be necessary. The following discussion is divided into four parts: (a) content of group talk about texts, (b) nature of group talk, and (c) efficacy of group talk.

**Content of Group Talk about Texts**

Some researchers have examined the content of talk about texts in peer response groups. Jones (1977/1978) classified the foci of students' comments into six areas: content, structure, paragraph structure, sentence structure, diction, and mechanics (70% of the comments were devoted to sentence structure, diction, and mechanics). Danis' sophomores (1982) addressed four areas of writing: content, mechanics, organization, and language (respectively constituting 36%, 20%, 14%, and 29% of the talk). Ziv's freshmen (1983) provided criticism on content, form, and conceptual and structural elements of the text. Danis
(1980) found that college sophomores offered suggestions for revision on five areas: development, clarity and precision of language, mechanics, organization, and focus (in descending order of frequency). David’s (1986) and Greene’s (1988) college writers were able to identify problems on all levels of discourse. Greene (1988) further stressed that students were particularly successful on the semantic level. The above studies show that students respond to writing at all discourse levels, including both macro (e.g. content, structure) and micro elements (e.g., grammar, mechanics). Responses in general focus mostly on content and meaning.

**Nature of Group Talk**

Some studies examined the nature of conversation in the groups and categorized the talk into several types. Liner (1984) presented eight types of talk among high school students: structuring talk (language used to move the group discussion along), joking, explanation about writing, statements about experience written about, opinion about the writing (general or specific), and technical editing. When discussing the texts the students produced six kinds of talk: questions, praise, criticism, suggestions, expanding on the subject, and other responses. David’s study (1986) of college writers identified four types: response to writing, talk to establish emotional climate, talk to move the group along, and talk addressed to the listener of the tape. Gere and Stevens’ (1985) and Gere and Abbott’s (1985)
study of elementary and high school students identified four topics of talk: procedure, writing, content, and context. Danis (1980) identified five writer responses: raising questions about the writing, proposing suggestions about the writing, expressing agreement or disagreement with suggestions, explaining the intentions behind the writing, and choosing not to direct the discussion when giving suggestions. Benesch (1985/1986) identified six writer responses: eliciting (getting feedback from the reader), acknowledging (signalling to the reader that the writer is listening), explaining (stating the process or purpose of the writing), extending (elaboration of what already exist on the page and articulation of what is in the writer’s mind), apologizing (the writer prefacing his/her reading of the draft), and avoiding (forewarning the reader to be gentle in giving feedback). Benesch also established four reader responses: sharing (acknowledging the writer’s effort), mirroring (summarizing and paraphrasing text to let the writer know if the writing is understood or not), responding (discussing writing), and helping (offering suggestions for revision). Calkins (1986) and Freedman (1987, 1992) also established their own categories.

In the L2 context, Stanley’s (1988) study of ESL university freshmen identified seven kinds of evaluator responses: announcing what the reader read as he/she walks through the text (e.g., saying what a particular text
section is about), pointing (e.g., repeating particular words from the text), advising (outlining changes to be made), collaborating (e.g., offering what to write), eliciting comments from members, questioning, and reacting (e.g., evaluating the text). She also identified four writer responses: announcing, clarifying, responding by answering questions, and eliciting advice from peers.

The above literature has several implications. First, the talk is diverse. The majority of it serves the cognitive function of discussing writing, and the rest serves the social function of establishing rapport (e.g., joking) or the procedural function of getting the discussion going (e.g., eliciting feedback). In the talk about writing, students are concerned about not only surface-level (e.g., technical editing) but also global-level elements (e.g., content). They not only tell writers what they think of the writing but also work with them to find ways to revise. The students do not restrict themselves to discussing the texts, but extend their concerns to the process and context of writing. They not only examine others' writing but also assess their own.

**Efficacy of Group Talk**

Research indicates that college and high school students are on task during peer response sessions (Danis, 1982; Coleman, 1984; Gere & Abbott, 1985; David, 1986). Benesch's (1985/1986) and David's (1986) college students
spent the majority of group time discussing drafts. Gere and Stevens (1985) found that the greatest number of responses fell in the category of "talk about writing" and the second most frequent type of talk was "collaborative talk" (to help the writer revise). Freedman's (1987) ninth-graders, Jacobs' (1987) and Nelson and Murphy's (1992) EFL university students also critiqued texts as they were supposed to do.

Research shows that comments made by peers are helpful for revision. (In the following review, L2 studies will be distinguished by the symbol "L2" in citations.) Gere and Stevens (1985) concluded that 5th-, 8th-, and 12th-graders' comments, when compared with teachers' (which were standardized to the extent that they could be transposed from one text to another), were more specific to particular texts and more attentive to the writer's intended meaning. They were also richer and more varied. Gere (1982) also reported that most comments provided directions for revision. Partridge (1981) believed that college ESL students' response is more at the learners' level of development or interest, thus perceived as more informative than the teacher's. Danis (1980) showed that 90% of the comments made by college sophomores were accurate, and 60% of them would produce good effects if acted upon. In 75% of the papers the students either accurately identified major weaknesses or recognized the need for minor revisions. The
students were especially apt at helping with development of ideas, improvement of cohesion, and revision of awkward or ambiguous passages. Caulk (1994) showed that 85% of college ESL college students made valid suggestions, and 60% of them brought up valid suggestions that their instructor had not thought of. Only 6% of their suggestions were not valid. Unlike the teacher's comments, which were general and often aimed at the whole piece of writing, the students' comments were more specific but rarely contained suggestions for the whole piece of writing.

Research also shows that peer response prompts exploration of ideas about writing. Gere and Abbott (1985) indicated that through talking one student was able to make a new connection between his language and the language of the novel he was writing about. Gere (1987) called this exploratory talk and said that its ambiguity was functional because it encouraged exploration. Gere and Stevens (1985) also showed that students' language was often tentative. Students framed their comments in terms of their own experience with the writing rather than some "Ideal" text (as teachers would). Writers also asked questions about their own work and involved others in the forms and processes of their own writing. Glassner (1983) found that college freshmen discovered what they wanted to say through interacting with peers.
Such exploratory talk is conducive to problem solving. Nystrand's (1986) case studies of two college writing groups showed that students engaged in extensive collaborative problem solving that ranged from searching for a word to jointly revising a troublesome paragraph. Their discussion ranged from general characterization of both strengths and weaknesses of particular texts to detailed discussions about reworking problem sections. The groups also tended to focus on those parts that were unclear or troublesome. In one group, the solutions to problems the students presented often caused new problems. However, the process of brainstorming for ways to revise made them more aware of discourse strategies and better able to predict audience reactions.

Through working together, students create their own standards for evaluating writing and a language to discuss it. Bencich's study (1989/1990) of 11th-graders indicated that standards for good writing evolved from criteria presented by the teacher but were interpreted and implemented in the social context of the peer group. Stories which evoked humor and awe were valued. Research shows that peer response groups also develop a metalanguage in which to talk about writing. Gere and Abbott (1985) found that 5th-, 8th-, and 12th-graders used a significant amount of terminology to describe forms of writing acceptable in a given community. They explored ideas of
style and organization and referred to their habits of drafting and revising. Gere (1987) concluded that this metalanguage aided the growth of skills in critiquing writing. Danis' (1980) college sophomores created such a shared language to exchange suggestions and maintain harmonious relationships. Hoffman's (1983/1984) college freshmen used it to facilitate their movement into a community of writers and writing specialists. In still another study, Ludlam (1992) identified 18 norms of language use in a high school writing group. The group talk was used not only to accomplish assigned writing tasks but also to accomplish the construction of a language community within the group and to define the individual social identities of the group members.

However, research also indicates that peer response sometimes fails as a result of students' lack of ability to critique writing. Some scholars criticized peer feedback as a practice of the blind leading the blind. Pianko and Radzik (1980) and Ziv (1983) noted that some college students had absolutely no editing skills. Danis (1980, 1982) and Ziv (1983) showed that college students sometimes provided inaccurate advice or failed to suggest revisions. Danis (1980, 1982), Flynn (1982), and Rothstein-Vandergriff and Gilson (1988) demonstrated that college students overlooked problems and spent too much time on minor weaknesses. Research also shows that students have
difficulty reading the text analytically (Flynn, 1982; Rothstein-Vandergriff & Gilson, 1988) and fail to ask the writer for definition, restatement, or illustration (Danis, 1982). Even if they could sense what is wrong with the text, they might have difficulty expressing themselves. Their comments are usually very general (Greene, 1988) and often the distance is quite wide between what students observe in the writing and what their linguistic tools and critical vocabulary permit them to say (Ritchie, 1983).

The discrepancy in the criteria and stance teachers and students use when responding to writing may be another problem. (Ziv, 1983; Newkirk, 1984a, 1984b). According to Nold (1978), the teacher and students form two distinct "interpretative communities." Newkirk noted that college students' responses were less effective than the teacher's in some ways: (1) Strong peer identification made the students more willing than the teacher to fill in missing information as they read, thus rendering them more tolerant of underdeveloped prose. (2) The students tended to reward a rather clumsy attempt on the assumption that it was what their teacher would like. (3) The teacher was more willing to put aside personal opinion and help students express ideas while the students tended to reject an idea rather than help a writer express that idea. Therefore a student who revises according to their peers' suggestions may not be appreciated by the teacher.
Teachers using peer response must not only be aware of the problems inherent in peer response, mentioned above, but they must also recognize that individual students act differently in the groups. They may have different concerns when responding to writing. Benesch's (1985/1986) study of three college freshmen showed that one was mainly concerned with either getting praise from the group, which meant no need for revision, or getting prescriptive comments which would direct her to revise. Another was preoccupied with the competitive urge to find out who did the assignment according to the teachers' specifications best. The third one was obsessed with his strong belief that school writing was uncreative writing while out-of-school was creative writing, and this prevented him from applying what he learned in class to self-initiated writing in his discussion of it.

Individual students are also unique in their style of response and in the kinds of responses they elicit. Baum Brunner's (1990) study of 12th-graders found that certain styles were more conducive to growth than others. The more effective response styles were direct and directive, elaborated over many turns on few topics, collaborated by many different people, summarized and restated often, included modeling and "imagined" suggestions for future drafts. The less effective responses were indirect,
unelaborated, disrupted and interrupted, switching from topic to topic and idea to idea.

There are also individual differences in students' perception of the group task to be performed. Nystrand's (1986) study of college freshmen showed that groups varied significantly in how they dealt with writing problems. Some superficially considered their task complete once they labelled a general problem and failed to examine the trouble source, while others talked at length about ideas. Freedman's (1987) study of 9th-graders concluded that groups worked differently depending on the classrooms and the age and type of students. Students from one class responded in ways that helped them develop evaluative skills, and students from the other worked to collaborate around discovery of the writing craft.

Another element that complicates the issue is that students react differently to different types of comments. Benesch's study (1985/1986) of college freshmen found that (1) questions posed by the readers tended to encourage verbal elaboration and modification of ideas expressed in drafts, (2) feedback comprised primarily of either praise or suggestions for revision tended to limit the degree of collaboration, (3) discussion of the responding process induced the highest degree of participation.
In summary, some research findings suggest that students do have the ability to conduct successful peer response sessions. They stay on task to explore their ideas and ways to solve their writing problems. The comments they make have good potential for bringing about effective revision. Together the students create criteria for evaluating writing as well as a metalanguage for it. However, some research shows that peer response sometimes fails because students lack critiquing ability. Another problem is that students and teachers have different criteria for evaluating writing. The findings also suggest that there are many individual differences in the way students critique writing.

Development of Students' Ability to Critique Writing

Research shows that students' performance changes over time, mostly in a positive manner. Liner's study (1984) of 10th- and 11th-graders reported that during five weeks of peer response training the group passed through three stages: initiation, working, and celebrating. As time went by, talk about the experiences written about became more frequent. Praise increased and became more specific. Episodes of talk demonstrated a broadening of the group's perspective from the stance of the writer to include the stances of experience and audience.

Ziv's study of college sophomores (1983) showed that in the beginning of the semester students mainly offered praise
and very little feedback on content. As the semester progressed, there were more comments on content and form (e.g., grammar) and a small number on the conceptual and structural elements of writing. At the end of the semester, the students’ talk of the content and form remained the same, but their responses to the conceptual and structural elements changed from simply critiquing to suggesting revisions in addition to editing.

Ritchie (1983) identified five types of positive development in junior high school students’ responses: (1) simple comments developed into more elaborated, subtle, and abstract ones; (2) general responses developed into those which were specific to each writing and to the elements within the writing; (3) responses developed in intensity as manifested by forcefulness, frequency, or repetition; (4) increasing awareness of the reader’s perspective, (5) increase in variety and diversity, proceeding from simple statements or questions to comparisons, extensive questioning, re-reading, dramatization, and parodying. For the students, responding was a process of discovery of new insights about themselves and their experience.

Similarly, Coleman’s study of college students (1984) found a positive shift from a concern for surface changes to a concern for meaning changes. Hoffman (1983/1984) pointed out that the pattern of responding among college freshmen became increasingly sophisticated.
Research also shows that students change from responding to writing as a finished product to responding to it as a process. Bencich (1989/1990) showed that at the early phase 11th-graders viewed their writing as either good or bad. This dichotomous view yielded responses of praise for good writing and silence for bad writing. At the later phase, they perceived most bad writing as unfinished writing and believed that even good writing could be improved through the gradual processes of rethinking and revision. This view of writing as a process caused their responses to focus more on what could be changed. Nystrand (1986) studied a group of college freshmen who received peer response and a group who received teacher feedback. The findings showed that the former came increasingly to see revision as reconceptualization while the latter increasingly treated it as editing. The former increasingly viewed their readers as collaborators in a process of communication while the latter thought of them as judges.

Students also gradually become more aware of ownership of their writing. Bencich (1989/1990) found that in the early stage 11th-graders did not show ownership of their writing and made revisions grudgingly under peer pressure. Later on they assumed authority over their texts and used the response interaction as a vehicle for rethinking their own writing decisions and for shaping future writing.
In summary, the development of critiquing performance appears positive, indicating that given training students can improve their responses. Students become more competent in responding, as evidenced by the increase in specificity, elaborateness, complexity, and diversity of comments. Their discourse concerns shift from lower to higher levels. They move from being able to reflect the writing back to the writer to being able to make suggestions for revision. The students also become more aware of audience and ownership of their writing. They also increasingly respond to writing as a process rather than a product.

**Differences in Ability to Critique One’s Own Texts and Ability to Critique Those of Others**

Research seems to suggest that it is more difficult to detect problems in one’s own texts than those of others. Hull (1987) found that when revising others’ essays, skilled writers revised more than unskilled ones. However, these two groups performed similarly when revising their own essays, where neither corrected many errors at all. Bartlett (1981) suggested that this may have to do with the "privileged information" writers have about their own intentions. As to differences in students’ ability to critique their own texts and those of others in peer response groups, research presents inconsistent findings. Bencich (1989/1990) found that 11th-graders’ responses to others indicated what the responder valued and attempted in
his or her own writing. The ability to respond to work written by others corresponded to the writer's ability to respond to his/her own writing. However, two studies found peer response to be less effective in helping students diagnose their own problems than it was in helping them diagnose their peers'. Barcelow-Hill's (1988) study of university freshmen found that the group which used peer feedback wrote more diagnostic comments or qualitatively more sophisticated comments on others' texts than the group which used teacher feedback. However, when critiquing their own texts, the two groups performed similarly. Greene (1988) found that basic writers also identified a lower percentage of problems on the semantic level of discourse in their own texts than in those of others. The contradiction in the above three studies may have come from the different discourse modes involved (expressive vs. expository) and the research methods used (quantitative vs. qualitative).

**Students' Group Interaction**

How students interact in a group is another indicator of whether it is successful. Research shows that students exhibit diverse responding styles. Bencich (1989/1990) studied a group consisting of 29 11th-graders and found five response patterns: egocentric (responding with the speaker's own writing in mind), competitive (competing to tell the stories the speaker wrote or give advice to the writer), collaborative (supporting one another by echoing
the same thought about a reading), emotional (unable to respond after an emotional reading), and disinterested (having nothing to say about the reading). She also found that students played a variety of roles and sometimes different ones at different times. The roles included writer (student who identified himself/herself as writer and tended to make critical responses on content and mechanics), clown (student who often felt the need to liven up group activities or call attention to himself/herself), silent (student who perceived his/her responses as unimportant or repetitious of others' comments), and sensitive (student who felt painfully ill-at-ease when listening to a sad story). She identified five individual responses: social (comments that established rapport), critical (comments that pointed out problems), visceral (casual reactions that included involuntary and frequently group-wide outbursts such as applause or exclamations), generic (safe and non-committal responses that enabled a responder to participate without saying anything specific, e.g., "good"), and private (remarks addressed between friends sitting close together). Bencich noted that the students engaged in different responses in different situations.

In a similar vein, Danis (1980) found each of her six college groups to have a different personality: debaters, encouragers, quiet ones, assortment, drifters, and workers. Tebo-Messina (1987/1988) named her college groups the
Generation-Gap and the Go-Getters, since the former consisted of students at very different ages and the latter consisted of hardworking members. George (1984) identified three types of groups among university students: the task-oriented, the leaderless, and the dysfunctional. Paper (1992/1993) showed that personality plays a significant role in group dynamics for college students. In the L2 context, Nelson and Murphy's (1992) study of college students found that they were defined as good or poor writers by the group, and such roles determined the way they interacted in the group. At the end of the course, one poor writer who received much negative criticism withdrew from group discussions, while one good writer who received much praise participated more in the discussion.

As to the quality of interaction, some research shows positive characteristics. Hoffman (1983/1984) noted that college freshmen possessed skills that allowed them to collaborate. They set the group in the right frame of mind before proceeding with the task of responding by dealing with anxiety, establishing a place and function for each member in the group, and establishing the authority of the group. Danis (1980) found that college sophomores behaved tactfully and phrased their suggestions as alternatives rather than imperatives. Bencich (1989/1990) noted that 11th-graders responded to emotional stories with empathy and an expressed sense of community. David (1986) reported that
college peer response groups became a community of writers who provided psychological support for one another and developed closer relationships. Liner (1984) found that 10th- and 11th-graders' groups develop rituals to regulate group activities. The group leader formed the habit of designating the first reader and having the group proceed in clockwise motion.

However, some groups do not interact smoothly. Students' confusion about the role they play is one of the elements that hinder the group process. Danis' (1980, 1982) study of college sophomores found that a group without a leader would drift away from task. Danis (1980, 1982) and Spear (1988) both reported that students were often unsure of their roles and failed to maintain group activity. Flynn (1982) found that college students did not want to critique others' writing. Danis' college sophomores (1980, 1982), Freedman's 9th-graders (1987), and Allaei and Connor's East Asian EFL college students (1990) were reluctant to provide negative criticism. When Freedman's students solicited help, the group offered advice only 12.5% of the time. They rarely discussed real writing problems and often resisted filling out dittoed response sheets required by the teacher. Spear (1988) believed that college students' concern about preserving harmony and the assumption that it is inappropriate to pass judgement on others' writing could cause the group to keep silent. Some students'
misconception of drafts as final products may also make them unwilling to comment on others' writing. Benesch's (1985/1986) college freshmen avoided collaborating in the group due to the competition induced by teacher-generated assignments and the belief that peer response and school writing were perfunctory. Berkenkotter's study (1984) of three college freshmen found that one of them refused to read others' texts carefully.

Interpersonal conflicts do arise. Ziv's (1983) college freshmen resented being criticized by someone other than the teacher. Tebo-Messina's (1987/1988) college freshmen became hostile over issues of leadership and composing styles. Their conflicts resulted from differences in personality, maturity, previous group experiences, group-created norms, and competition induced by shared teacher-assigned writing tasks. Some students were so discouraged by the conflicts that they became less diligent in doing assignments. The students sensed tension and frustrations throughout the year. Thomas' (1984/1985) college freshmen also felt defensive toward criticism on their writing. In the ESL context, Jacobs' study (1987) pointed out that university students were annoyed by the way negative comments were made by peers, especially comments on writing content. Nelson and Murphy's (1992) study of one college writing group found that throughout the course the peer response sessions were dominated by one female student who attacked others' writing.
tactlessly, and the others tended to defend themselves or the other members against her. Sometimes such attacks turned the sessions into duels and caused some members to withdraw from participation.

In summary, research on the social interaction of peer response groups seems to indicate that students exhibit different interaction styles both as individuals and groups. As to the characteristics of the interaction, research shows mixed findings. Some groups seem to be able to create supportive atmosphere, develop close relationship among themselves, and turn group experience into an enjoyable one. On the other hand, others seem to fail to participate in discussion, feel discomfort about criticism, or even suffer from interpersonal conflicts.

Changes in Group Interaction over Time

Much research indicates positive changes in the development of students' interaction. For example, Liner (1984) found that the atmosphere in his group of 10th- and 11th-graders seemed to become increasingly more conducive to collaboration. Joking increased among the students and laughter occurred frequently. There was some criticism in the beginning, but it disappeared completely by the last session. Draper (1989) found that for some college freshmen the peer response session changed from a power trip to an empowering conversation. The change was dependent on the students' conception of what writing meant and their
willingness to engage in a dialogue. Those who saw discussion of texts as conversation and resisted playing a dominating role were better able to engage in empowering relationships.

Students' involvement with group activities increases. Liner (1984) and Holley (1990/1991) found that senior high school students became more involved with the sharing activity over time. Liner (1984) noted that students anticipated editing sessions and carefully prepared for them. They read aloud more writing, including in-process pieces, from session to session. David (1986) and Herrington and Cadman (1991) reported that college students took greater responsibility for their learning. Bencich (1989/1990) indicated that for 11th-graders involvement in the process of writing and responding gradually took preeminence over the necessity to produce a final product for a grade. David (1986) also noted that college writers spent increasingly more efforts on task. Talk about writing increased to constitute three quarters of the total talk at the end of the semester, while talk addressed to the listener of the tape disappeared. Coleman (1984) found that college students interrupted their own reading of their drafts to critique their works more than they had during the initial session.

Students' perception of peer response also changes in a positive manner. Bencich (1989/1990) found that early in
the interaction 11th-graders were apt to perceive responses as criticism, later they differentiated between good and bad criticism, and finally they referred to response as help.

There are also groups that experienced negative changes. Tebo-Messina’s (1987/1988) study of college freshmen indicated that the more members learned about one another, the more the tension caused by different behavior patterns and value systems heightened. In one group the students became increasingly hostile. In the other group the students moved from a lively, animated interaction to frustration and hostility, which made them less diligent in doing assignments. The desire to be part of the group decreased for both groups.

In summary, the development of interaction in the group seems to be positive in most cases. As time goes by, students seem to become more involved in the learning process and have increasingly positive views about peer response. With more practice in working in the groups, most students do develop positive interaction patterns.

Students’ Use of Peer Response and Their Attitude Toward It

There are mixed findings about the receptivity of students to their peers’ comments. Liner’s (1984) 10th- and 11th-graders and David’s (1986) college students were very appreciative of their peers’ comments. Jones (1977/1978) showed that high school seniors accepted more criticisms (72% of the criticisms offered) than they refused. On the
other hand, research also shows that students may not revise according to their peers' suggestions. Ziv (1983) and Glassner (1983) found that college freshmen did not always revise in response to peer comments, and the reasons for not revising included their lack of revision experience and their peers' failure to offer adequate suggestions. Ziv (1983) noted that some college freshmen thought their peers' comments on content were unhelpful because they often failed to include suggestions on how to revise. Bender (1989/1990) showed that confident, advanced college students incorporated cues about revision from their peers only if the former agreed with the latter. Both advanced and novice writers who lacked confidence needed teacher support in addition to peer support.

Some studies reported that students' sense of authority over their texts affects their receptiveness to peers' comments. Berkenkotter's study (1984) of three college freshmen found that one subject resisted reading his texts responsibly and blindly rejected others' suggestions for revision. Another subject retained strong control of his text and revised on his own. A third subject's receptivity to her readers' sometimes hyper-critical suggestions made her lose sight of her purpose for writing and she regained control only after she began to take a more adversarial stance towards her group. How these students dealt with their sense of ownership of their writing was related to
their personality, level of maturity, and ability to handle writing problems.

The level of students' ability may also come into play. Sitko's study (1989) of 11th-graders showed that the more able writers were more accepting of peer response than the less able ones. Stone (1981) claimed that for the more advanced college students peer evaluation was more important.

With regard to students' attitudes towards peer response, research also shows mixed findings. Some studies indicate that students have positive attitudes. Bencich (1989/1990) found that for 11th-graders, peers' opinions seemed to be more important than a grade, as evidenced by the influence of these opinions on writers' authorial choices. Involvement in a writing group was a pleasurable and beneficial social experience. Even though they did not like reading their stories out loud to the group, all of them enjoyed listening to stories read to them. Familiarity with peer response even led them to seek out new sources of response among out-of-class friends or family members. Liner (1984) also found that 10th- and 11th-graders enjoyed sharing writing and personal experiences. Their choice of pieces for publishing was increasingly influenced by their peers. Liner (1984) and David (1986) reported that high school and college peer response groups became a community
of writers who developed closer relationship with their group members over time.

However, research also reveals negative attitudes towards peer response. Danis (1982), Ziv (1983), and Spear (1988) reported that some college students did not regard their peers as valid audiences. Danis (1982) showed that they thus failed to ask critical questions of or discuss with their peers. Benesch's (1985/1986) college freshmen felt that peer response was more perfunctory than genuine. Few of Tebo-Messina's (1987/1988) college freshmen desired to be part of the group. They either had reservations about the value of the group or felt resentment towards it. Some college ESL teachers and students are also worried about using peer response because of a lack of confidence in students' language ability (Chaudron, 1984; Jacobs, 1987; Allaei & Connor, 1990).

As discussed above, findings on L1 students' use of peer response and their attitudes toward it have been mixed so far. As for students of L2, the few conducted so far seem to indicate that students are more negative toward peer response than L1 students.

Effects of Peer Response on Student Writers

Many studies have shown peer response to have the following benefits.

1. Many L1 studies examined the efficacy of peer response on improving writing as compared with teacher
response. Six studies showed peer response to be more effective than teacher response (Ford, 1972/1973; Sager, 1973; Benson, 1979; Karengianes et al., 1980; Nystrand, 1986; Richer, 1992/1993). Two studies reported peer response as less effective than teacher response (Boss, 1987; Yaronczyk, 1989/1990). Eleven studies claimed no significant difference (Pierson, 1967; Putz, 1970; Farrell, 1977; Pfeiffer, 1981; Elias, 1981/1982; King, 1981/1982; Hittleman, 1983; Jordan, 1983/1984; Loken, 1985/1986; Califano, 1987/1989; Sultan, 1989). Four studies showed mixed results. Of these, Lagana (1972) proved that on critical thinking, organization, and appropriateness peer response was more effective than teacher response, while on writing conventions the opposite was true. Similarly, Clifford (1981) and Broome (1988/1989) showed that peer response excelled over teacher response in improving writing ability in all aspects except surface-level concerns, where there was no significant difference between the two. Stone's (1981) results are contradictory. It was found that criticism on content and organization was valued more if it came from the teacher while criticism on style was valued more if it came from peers.

In the L2 context, few studies were conducted and the findings were disparate. Partridge (1981) showed teacher response to be more effective than peer response. Chaudron (1984) claimed no difference. Zhang and Halpern (1984),
Zhang (1985), and Jacobs and Zhang (1989) showed that there was no difference between the two in their effects on content/discourse. On grammar/mechanics, however, Zhang and Halpern (1984) showed that teacher response was more effective, while Zhang (1985) and Jacobs and Zhang (1989) claimed that teacher response was just as effective.

Researchers have also looked directly into the differences in the quality of writing caused by peer response without comparing them with those caused by teacher feedback. Many studies have proven that peer response improves the final written products, as indicated by comparisons of entry and exit level writing quality (Liner, 1984; Gere & Stevens, 1985; David, 1986; Nystrand, 1986; Cover, 1987/1988; Nelson, 1989/1990). Liner (1984) claimed that peer response made 10th- and 11th-graders feel freer to reveal themselves and thus helped them develop a voice in their writing. Their stories became more interesting, honest, and alive. Many studies also showed peer response brought about improvement between first and subsequent drafts. Gere and Stevens (1985) concluded that 5th-, 8th-, and 12th-graders made constructive comments and helped one another towards better drafts. Danis (1982) claimed that college sophomores provided objective reflection for writing and that 60% of the revisions improved the writing. Jones (1977/1978) showed that high school seniors corrected about 60% of their errors after getting feedback from their peers.
In the ESL context, Jacobs (1989) indicated that university students miscorrected very few grammatical errors with the help of peer response.

2. Peer response cultivates critiquing ability. Barcelow-Hill (1988) showed that university students who worked in peer response groups wrote more diagnostic comments and more qualitatively sophisticated comments when responding to their peers' writing than students who received teacher feedback. David's (1986), Greene's (1988), and Herrington and Cadman's college students (1991) as well as Urzu'a's (1987) ESL 4th- and 6th-graders developed critical thinking ability through evaluating others' writing. Freedman (1987) and Coleman (1984) indicated that 9th-graders and college students used peer response to analyze their own writing and solve writing problems. Bencich (1989/1990) claimed that many 11th-graders in her study experienced a gradual decentering of response to their own work as a result of participation in peer response groups. They learned to respond to their own writing in the same way that they responded to others' writing and experienced an enlargement of viewpoint which permitted self-evaluation.

3. Peer response cultivates writers' ability to monitor their writing process. Coleman's college basic writers (1984) learned to use dissonance induced by peers' comments as a stimulus for revising. Their ability to
monitor their own writing was increased and their writing increasingly moved from writer-based to reader-based prose. Glassner (1983) proved that peer feedback helped college freshmen with their subsequent planning of rhetorical strategies. Nystrand (1983) and Bencich (1989/1990) found that the response process taught college students and 11th-graders to be more attentive to the metacognitive processes of writing both in their own and others' work.


5. Peer response helps students establish a sense of authorship. Jones (1977/1978) and Hoffman (1983/1984) indicated that reading aloud could help high school seniors and college freshmen develop a sense of themselves as writers. Bencich (1989/1990) reported that peer response groups provided 11th-graders constant comparison with one another as well as comparison of the oral and written voice. Out of these interactive comparisons, students developed a sense of voice. In the L2 context, Urzua (1987) also proved
that peer feedback helped 4th- and 6th-graders develop a sense of voice and a sense of power in language.


7. A peer response group acts as a community in which student writers get support from each other. Liner (1984) found that his group of 10th- and 11th-graders functioned more as a support group and forum for sharing writings than as a panel for evaluation and criticism. Praise was more common than criticism or suggestions for revision.

Nelson and Murphy's (1992) study of an ESL college writing group showed that the student who was labeled as a good writer by the group improved his attitude toward writing. Other studies indicated that college students' writing apprehension is alleviated (Fox, 1980; Loken, 1985/1986) and their respect for writing is enhanced (Bender, 1989/1990). Liner (1984) claimed that 10th- and 11th-graders showed more confidence in their writing ability, as evidenced by the increase of self-revelation and emergence of a voice in their writing.

In opposition to the above findings, some research shows that peer response fails to improve writing, as measured by the difference in the quality of the writing in pre- and post-tests. Wunsch (1980/1981) and Carter (1982) noted that college students who received extensive practice in peer evaluation did not outperform those without such training. Putz (1970), Pfeiffer (1981), DiMento (1988/1989), and Sultan (1989) showed that the writing of 11th- and 12th-graders and that of college freshmen did not indicate any improvement. Yaronczyk (1990), King (1981/1982), and Craig (1981/1982) even reported that the quality of the writing declined for 7th- and 11th-graders as well as college freshmen. The failure of peer response to help students improve their writing may be attributed to their inability to provide valid comments. Some researchers have doubts about college students' ability to help their
peers with revising (Pianko & Radzik, 1980; Ziv, 1983). Even if they sometimes learn what is wrong with their text from their peers' comments, they might have difficulty transferring their peers' suggestions into effective revisions (Rubin, 1983). Ritchie (1983) claimed that there was a big gap between the response junior high school students made or received and what they were able to produce in writing.

In addition, one study found that peers actually inhibit writing. Bencich (1989/1990) reported that some 11th-graders were so painfully aware of their peers as the audience that they felt inhibited from attempting personal writing. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, studies that report such a negative effect on students' attitude toward writing are very few and only personal writing is concerned.

In summary, some L1 studies showed peer response to be more effective in improving writing than teacher response, and others showed them to be equally effective. In the L2 context the findings were reversed, more in favor of teacher response. Some researchers also looked into the effects of peer response on the quality of writing as shown in pre- and post tests, and the findings seem contradictory. It is possible that there are factors that make peer response either effective or ineffective. It is also possible that, since writing skills develop slowly, students' improvement
in writing may not always be detected within the time span of the experiments. However, the changes in quality as shown in the first and subsequent drafts of individual pieces of writing have all been positive.

Peer response has additional benefits that speak strongly for its value as a tool to help students revise. It has been shown to cultivate students' ability to critique writing and monitor their writing process. It helps them develop audience awareness and a sense of themselves as writers. It also motivates writing and revising and improves attitudes toward writing. All of these benefits may be considered signs that peer response has the potential for facilitating writing instruction.

**Similarities and Differences between L1 and L2 Groups**

Since the subjects in the present study are L2 learners, the question arises whether peer response has the same effects on L1 and L2 writers. Zamel (1976) and Raimes (1979) claimed that L1 composition theory, practice, and research can be applied to L2 writing. Research shows that L1 and L2 composing processes are very similar, indicating that L1 and L2 writing are closely related (Zamel, 1983; Brooks, 1985; Martin-Betancourt, 1986; Arndt 1987). For example, the L2 writing process of Chinese students is similar to that of L1 (Arndt, 1987). Research also indicates that learners transfer their L1 writing skills to L2 writing (Edelsky, 1982; Gaskill, 1986/1987; Jones &
Tetroe, 1987; Hall, 1990). For example, Edelsky (1982) claimed that for Spanish L1 English L2 writers every L1 strategy was applied to L2 writing, from local elements regarding spelling to abstract processes for producing texts and personal writing style. Hall (1990) noted that a single system was used when advanced writers revised across languages, and that both L1 and L2 knowledge and experience were used. Research also shows that L1 and L2 writing proficiencies are related (Cumming, 1989; De Jesus, 1982; Stairs, 1990). Therefore it is possible that peer response may affect L1 and L2 learners in similar ways.

However, the study of L2 peer response groups also has to take into consideration the role culture plays in small group interaction. Some researchers claim that classroom behaviors are closely related to culture. McDaniel and Soong (1981) pointed out that Chinese learners were influenced by Confucian principles which emphasize submissiveness to authority, non-competitiveness, and punctiliousness in treatment of others. Therefore the Chinese children in their study appeared to feel that they were part of the group much more frequently than their American counterparts, and thus they tended to minimize their sense of self-importance and focus on group goals. McCargar (1993) and Hofstede (1986) also showed that Chinese students from mainland China and Taiwan were willing to consider the teacher as the authority in the classroom.
Similarly Ting (1987) and Carson (1992) reported that most language classrooms in mainland China were teacher-centered. Harris and Silva (1993) also found that ESL students who came from cultures or educational systems where teachers traditionally filled the role of knowledge providers might expect their teachers to provide solutions to their learning problems. Any teacher that did not do so might be considered incompetent. This attitude could cause them to feel puzzled in a peer response class where the teacher acted as a collaborator who wanted her students to seek help from other students. This view is also shared by Hofstede (1986).

Another consideration is that L2 learners from a variety of cultures seem to have less positive attitudes towards peer response than their L1 counterparts. When students' attitudes towards peer response and teacher response are compared, L1 research shows mixed results. Farrell (1977) suggested no difference in 11th-graders' preference. Boss (1987) reported that college freshmen preferred teacher feedback to peer feedback, but Lagana (1972) and Jordan (1983/1984) showed otherwise with 10th-graders and college students. However, L2 research seems to suggest stronger preference for teacher response. Even though Chaudron's (1984) study indicated equivocal results, with college students being appreciative of but also cautious about peer feedback, other studies suggested more...
negative attitudes towards peer response. Leki's (1991) college ESL students overwhelmingly considered the teacher the best help for error correction and were reluctant to seek peer help. Partridge (1981) and Zhang (1985) also claimed that teacher response was preferred by college students. In addition, Jacobs' (1987) study showed that sometimes college students grew unsatisfied with peers' comments and desired the teacher's assistance.

There is little literature on how L2 groups differ from their L1 counterparts. Based on the limited research mentioned above, it is speculated that L2 learners may have more misgivings about the efficacy of peer response due to their lack of confidence in their L2 language ability.

Summary

Peer response is a widely debated issue. Research has provided some insights into how it works in both the L1 and L2 contexts. Research into students' performance in critiquing writing in peer response groups shows that their talk performs many functions. The students respond to all discourse levels, including macro and micro elements, and most responses concern content and meaning. They not only discuss texts and work collaboratively to find ways to revise, but also talk about the process and context of writing. A small part of their talk also serves social and procedural functions.
The talk in the group shows that students have good potential for conducting successful peer response sessions. They devote most of the time to discussing texts. The talk seems to be helpful for revision since it is often valid. It is tentative and therefore allows exploration of ideas. It encourages problem solving and develops criteria and a metalanguage for evaluating writing.

However, some research has also pointed out issues that complicate the matter. Many studies have shown the inadequacy of peer response. Students have been shown to lack critiquing ability. Sometimes even if they are aware of problems in the text, they do not have the language to express themselves. The differences in approaches to responding to writing and criteria for assessing writing adopted by the teacher and the students represents another problem. Students may also have individual concerns about what to respond to and different task representations about the work they are supposed to do in the group.

Students' performance in critiquing writing changes over time in a peer response class, mostly in a positive manner. Students become more aware of audience and ownership of their writing. Discourse concerns move from surface level to global level. Comments become more elaborate, specific, complex, and varied. Students also gradually learn to respond to texts as in-process drafts rather than finished products.
Research into the influence of peer response on students' ability to critique their own texts and those of their peers has led to contradictory results. One study found that the ability to respond to work written by others corresponds to the ability to respond to one's own writing. However, two studies found peer response to be less effective in helping students diagnose their own problems than those of their peers.

As to the social interaction in the group, research shows that students behave very differently both as individuals and as groups. Some students seem to interact in a positive way by phrasing their opinions tactfully, creating a supportive community of writers, and developing friendship with one another. However, others seem unable to maintain discussion, feel uncomfortable about criticism, or even suffer interpersonal conflicts.

Social interaction changes over time, and generally improves. In some groups, the atmosphere becomes increasingly more conducive to collaboration. Students enjoy group activities more and develop closer relationships with one another. They become increasingly more involved with group activities by devoting more time to discussing texts. Some students also develop more positive views about peer response as evidenced by the shift from perceiving it as criticism to perceiving it as help.
With regard to the students' receptivity to peers' comments, findings on L1 students are mixed. Some students treasure comments from their peers, while others distrust them. Individual students are also different in their receptivity to peers' comments, depending on their sense of ownership of their writing, which is closely related to their personality, level of maturity, and ability to handle writing problems. Some studies showed that more able writers were more accepting of peer response than the less able ones.

Research also provides mixed findings regarding L1 students' attitudes towards peer response. Some studies indicate that students have positive attitudes and carefully prepare themselves for peer response sessions. However, others showed that some students do not consider their peers' comments as valid, and in extreme cases peer response even makes some students feel hostile about their group. In the L2 context the small amount of existing research shows more negative findings. Students seem to have some doubts about their peers and themselves as responders.

Many studies that looked into the effects of peer response on the quality of writing showed mixed findings, with some showing improvement and others showing none. Among these studies, those that defined improvement as the increase in scores between the pre- and post tests showed mixed results. However, those that defined improvement as
the difference in the quality of the first and subsequent drafts mostly showed positive findings. This suggests that peer response has the potential to facilitate revision.

In addition, peer response helps students develop the ability to diagnose problems in the text, monitor their writing process, and develop audience awareness. It also provides psychological support for students by creating a community of writers, encourages writing and revising, promotes positive attitudes toward writing, and induces in students a sense of themselves as writers. All of these characteristics speak well of peer response as a method of teaching writing.

As to the differences in L1 and L2 learners' reaction to peer response, the limited research in L2 shows that L2 students may have less positive attitudes than their L1 counterparts. For Chinese ESL learners, interaction in the classroom may be influenced by their tendency to minimize their self importance in the group. Their perception of the teacher as the knowledge provider and themselves as the knowledge receivers may make them unresponsive to peer response.

These research findings suggest that peer response has good potential for facilitating revision but also carries with it inherent problems. However, the changes exhibited by groups over time are mostly positive, indicating that given more training groups can improve their performance.
Research with a longer time frame may be needed to shed light on the value of peer response. In addition, since most of the studies reviewed above were conducted with L1 learners, research on L2 learners is greatly needed.
Chapter 3
Methodology

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, the research questions are stated as follows.

1. How do L2 students interact in peer response groups? What affects their interaction? What are the changes in interaction over time?

2. How do L2 students critique texts? What is the nature of the comments they make? What are the changes in their performance over time? What are the differences between the development of their ability to critique their own texts and those of their peers?

3. What impact does group discussion have on L2 students’ views about the texts being discussed?

4. How do L2 students’ react to peers’ comments? What are their attitudes toward ownership of their writing?

5. What is the quality of students’ revisions made in response to peers’ suggestions? What are the changes in their revision patterns, audience awareness, and attitudes towards writing?

This was a participant observer study in which the researcher gained access by virtue of being the teacher of the students being studied. It consisted of four case studies of individual students from one peer response group.
**Participants**

The participants were 15 English majors enrolled in Sophomore English Composition at a Catholic university in Taipei from September 1992 to June 1993. This university is privately funded and generally takes students who fail to get into national universities, which require higher scores at the nation-wide entrance exams. However, it is considered one of the better private universities in Taiwan.

The course the students were enrolled in was offered in combination with English Oral Training, which was taught by the same instructor. In the oral training class, the researcher sometimes had the students talk about issues that they were to write about in assignments for the composition class. For the composition class, the students met two hours each week for two semesters (34 weeks).

In the beginning, the researcher selected two groups out of a total of four as candidates for the case studies. These two, Groups 2 and 4, were chosen because the students in them talked louder than those in the others, and the researcher thought that would make the recording easier. After one semester, the researcher decided to use Group 2 for the case studies for three reasons. First, this group had students whose revision performances represented varying degrees of the effectiveness of peer response: two students appeared to benefit tremendously from such a teaching method, one did so to a lesser extent, and one benefitted
very little. Second, through observing the students interact at peer response sessions, the researcher hypothesized that individual characteristics such as defensiveness/receptiveness or assertiveness/passiveness played a very important role in the students' learning process, and Group 2 happened to have students who embodied the extremes of these characteristics. Third, three of the students showed dramatic changes (either very positive or very negative) in their learning processes, and the researcher believed they would make interesting case studies.

The students were fully aware of their participation in the research. In the beginning of the course, the researcher invited them to participate in the study and also informed them that they had the right to decline. The researcher also told them that their decisions would not affect their grades. None of the students refused to be in the study.

In reporting this research, the students have been given pseudonyms. Sometimes the students were referred to as the stronger, average, or weaker writers. This judgement was based on the researcher's assessment of their overall writing ability as shown in the five expository assignments examined in this study. Each piece of writing was given a rating based on its overall quality, as is done in holistic scoring (Cooper, 1977). Then the four case study students
were ranked according to their overall performance in the five assignments.

**Role of the Researcher**

The researcher's role as teacher enjoyed distinct advantages. First, she knew the students better than any outside researcher who might have come to observe the site only on certain days. Second, she had access to data from various sources which might not have been obtainable by an outsider. She could study the students in a natural setting without the intrusion an outsider would have posed. She could study them as whole persons, with empathy and involvement, which produced knowledge inaccessible to an outsider (Bissex & Bullock, 1987). As Kantor, Kirby, and Goetz (1981) observed, the researcher's participant-observer role allows her to explore the subjects' values and perspectives. However, a teacher-researcher also has to guard against the pitfalls resulting from intensive personal involvement.

At the outset of the study, the researcher had two master's degrees, one in English as a Second Language and the other in Curriculum and Instruction. She had six years of experience in teaching writing in the English-as-a-foreign-language context at the university level. She is a native Taiwanese, so she was able to use data which contained Chinese speech, and thus had access to information that would have unusable for a researcher without such a
bilingual background. In addition, she was familiar with the local classroom culture and was therefore able to interpret classroom events and interaction among the students and between the researcher and the students. She was also in a good position to assess the students' attitudes and values.

The researcher had firsthand experience with peer response in 1991, when she participated in the Hawaiian Writing Project, a workshop for elementary and high school writing teachers in Hawaii who were interested in developing their writing skills. She enriched her understanding of the benefits peer response groups offer, the challenges they pose, and the ways they can be structured. She felt the experience was very positive and helped improve her writing. This prompted her to continue to explore ways of getting groups to work more effectively. The way the group in this study was set up reflects her own interpretation of how peer response can be effectively used to promote the writing skills of L2 learners. Of course, it may be different from the way other teachers set up their groups.

**Instructional Methods**

The subjects' prior training in writing came from the general English classes (which integrated listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in their six years of high school, and also from two semesters of Freshman Composition at the university. In junior high school the type of
English writing required was mostly sentence completion, sentence making, and short paragraph writing. In senior high school the same kind of writing was again required, with the addition of more paragraph and short essay writing. Freshman English Composition focused on expository writing.

The composition course was conducted as a writing workshop, which was adopted from DeSpain's model (1992). The process approach was taken in the course, which involved pre-writing, writing, and revision. At the prewriting stage, freewriting was often used to generate ideas, followed by small-group discussion of their freewrites. Sometimes a few students were chosen to share their ideas with the whole class. For each assignment, at least two examples of the genre assigned were given and discussed. Writing was done outside of class. Revision was facilitated mainly through the use of peer response, written teacher feedback, and student-teacher conferences.

In the first semester, the students were required by the Department to write five assignments: #1, story, #2, film review, #3, synthesis, #4, comparison and contrast essay, and #5, synthesis. In the second semester, they were required to write four more: #6, definition essay, #7, research paper, #8, story, #9, argumentation essay. The minimum length for each paper was two pages, with the exception of the research paper, for which the minimum was five pages.
The main focus of this course was expository essays. The goal was to increase their repertoire of expository genres by learning to do six different types, as mentioned above. The students were supposed to strengthen their sense of structure by writing essays with an introduction, body, and conclusion, and with appropriate paragraphing, etc. Secondary emphasis was placed on clarity and coherence, and finally, syntax, vocabulary, and mechanics. The synthesis and research paper assignments were intended to introduce the students to the skills of citing, paraphrasing, summarizing, and synthesizing. With the exception of the two synthesis assignments, the students were allowed to choose their own topics. The rationale was that such practice would empower the students as writers since they would feel they were authorities on the subject matters they chose. The students were asked to plan their writing by thinking about their audience and purpose for writing.

When responding to writing in the groups, the students were instructed to focus mainly on macro-level elements of the discourse (e.g., content, structure), instead of micro-level ones (e.g., grammar, word usage). The rationale behind this is twofold. First, many basic writers tend to perceive revision as changing surface errors and neglect further exploring and reorganizing ideas (Beach, 1976; Bridwell, 1980; Sommers, 1980). Second, meaning and order are two areas where peer comments are considered to be
perhaps more valid than language correctness among ESL students (Zhang & Halpern, 1984; Zhang, 1985; Jacobs & Zhang, 1989). During a peer response session, the students based their responses on critique sheets which they wrote at home beforehand. One week after the session, they turned in a second draft for teacher response. A week after that they turned in the third draft for a grade.

When the researcher responded to writing, she focused both on the higher- and lower-level elements. In responding to the former, she often avoided giving direct suggestions for revision. Instead she often questioned the students or mirrored back the effects of the writing to lead the students to explore their problems. Sometimes she also pointed out problems directly. In responding to lower-level elements, the researcher often corrected the students' language errors for them.

**Peer Response Training Procedures**

The students formed writing groups of four through self selection to ensure comfort. The grouping remained intact throughout the school year. Peer response training aimed to cultivate collaborative skills as well as critiquing ability. The instructor demonstrated ways of responding to writing through her written comments on the students' second and third drafts and teacher-student conferences. Handouts providing guidelines on how to proceed in the groups, questions to consider for responding to writing in general
(modified from Elbow & Belanoff’s model, 1989, see Appendix A), and specific questions to ask when responding to each assignment were given (see Appendix B for a sample). Each session lasted 90 minutes. Discussion of each draft lasted ten minutes on average. After discussing a draft, the students wrote an after-session peer critique sheet and gave it to the author. During the discussion, the researcher rotated among the groups to monitor the process.

The students were encouraged to use as much English as possible. However, the researcher’s impression about writing groups in her previous classes was that code-switching may have enhanced the quality of group discussion. For that reason, the students were allowed to code-switch when necessary.

To help the students develop responding skills, the researcher occasionally reviewed the students’ critique sheets and wrote notes to each student. The notes were intended to show encouragement by pointing out the strong points of their comments and areas that needed to be worked on. Sometimes the researcher showed the whole class examples of effective or ineffective comments the students wrote and discussed ways to improve them.

Scholars and teachers have observed many elements that could cause a group to fail. For example, Spear (1988) noted some major problems and provided suggestions to solve them. The researcher incorporated these suggestions in
designing her training program. According to Spear (1988),
the first problem is confused expectations about the group's
purpose and students' role in it. The students in this
study were told that their role is to respond to writing so
that the writers become aware of the effects of their
writing. They were encouraged to express their difficulty
in understanding the text or their reactions to it, instead
of telling the writer how to write or making evaluative
judgements. Spear (1988) also mentioned the students' need
to preserve group harmony. The students in this study were
told that comments made about texts are a means of assisting
revision, instead of a breach of harmony. They were asked
to talk about not only the weaknesses but also the strengths
of the writing. They were also encouraged to show
appreciation for the comments received and not to argue with
students who provided the comments. Spear said students
misconceive revision as error correction and first drafts as
completed products which are not to be changed. Students in
this study were told that they should perceive texts as work
in progress and their role should be to facilitate the
process of reevaluating and exploring. Spear also mentioned
the failure to maintain group activity. To solve this
problem, a leader was designated to orchestrate the
sessions.

To ensure that the groups worked well, the researcher
constantly interviewed the students about their feelings
toward the group and their perceptions of the problems and value of peer response. In addition, the researcher asked the students to write logs about their learning processes, to which she responded. This provided a two-way channel for the researcher and the students to communicate their concerns. Information obtained was used to make pedagogical decisions. For instance, by the end of the first semester the researcher found out that a student named Katie was unsatisfied with her group, so she was switched to another one in the second semester.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected throughout two semesters. In order to ensure validity, audiotaped recording of peer response sessions, interviews with students, student learning logs, a focus group discussion, writing samples, the researcher's field notes, and a questionnaire were analyzed for triangulation, as recommended by Schatzman and Strauss (1973), Bogdan and Biklen (1982), and Hammersley and Atkinson (1983). In data analysis, efforts were made to identify recurring themes or topics that emerged in more than one incidence or data source (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982).

In each semester, only data collected when the students were writing expository essays were analyzed, since the researcher wanted to study exclusively how peer response affected the expository genre. Research shows that students' responses are affected by discourse mode (Gere &
Stevens, 1985), and therefore data were not collected when the students were writing the creative pieces. Since the first assignment was a creative piece, the researcher used this time to get the students used to being taped in peer response sessions. Assignments 3 and 5 were also excluded because in these two assignments the students were given articles to read, and were then asked to write a synthesis. In the other assignments, they chose their own topics.

In the analysis of the data, the researcher was aware that her role as teacher may have created some complications. Since the researcher was the evaluator, students may not have been entirely honest about their feelings. The researcher’s role as teacher may also have tempted her to see her teaching as a success story and overlook evidence that suggested otherwise. To counter this, she looked for negative evidence, extreme cases, and outliers which contradicted findings when forming conclusions.

The students might also have the tendency to say socially acceptable things when reporting feelings about their group. This pertains particularly to the focus group discussion, in which whatever was said was heard by everyone. The logs may have been affected too, since the researcher occasionally shared some logs with the class. An example is the contradictory data provided by one of the case study students, Man-Hua. During an interview in the
first semester the researcher found her to have a negative attitude toward peer response. However, in a log she wrote at the same time, she actually extolled the value of peer response. It is possible that Man-Hua lied in order not to embarrass her group. In such a case, the researcher ignored the data from the log. To counter problems of this nature, the researcher promised that the identity of all the case study students would be kept confidential in the reporting of research.

In addition, the research process may have affected the data. Since the researcher conducted many interviews with the case study students, these students actually had more opportunities than the others to think about revision. The taperecording at peer response sessions and interviews might also have influenced the students' performance. Among the four case study students, Sho-Li showed some uneasiness at the beginning of the course about being recorded, but such feelings went away gradually. Her increasing comfort with the tape-recorder might have contributed to the dramatic improvement in her participation during peer response sessions. This is suggested by the fact that the other students who did not feel uneasy about being recorded did not show such a dramatic change.

Data were collected from the following sources.
1. **Critique sheets**

About three days before a peer response session, the students exchanged copies of their first drafts, as recommended by Herrington and Cadman (1991). The researcher did not opt to have the students exchange their first drafts at the beginning of the sessions, nor to have the authors read their drafts aloud to the group. There were several reasons for this. Since the students were L2 learners, they might comprehend the writing better if they were allowed to read at their own pace. Another benefit of having copies of the texts for visual examination is that under such circumstances students tend to go beyond lower-order writing problems (e.g., word usage) and consider higher-order ones (e.g., structure) (Nystrand, 1986). All the students also told the researcher that they preferred reading drafts silently to listening to them, since they felt they could understand better that way.

After reading all the drafts, the students wrote peer and self critique sheets at home, which were called before-session peer and self critiques (see Appendix C for a sample). The researcher did not use any prompts on the sheets so that the students could say anything they wanted. The researcher also used the critique sheets as a device to ensure that the students come to peer response sessions prepared. During the peer response sessions, the students based their discussion on the critique sheets. After the
sharing of each draft, the students wrote a second peer critique, which was called the after-session peer critique (see Appendix C for a sample). After the whole session was over, the students also wrote their second self critique, called the after-session self critique. These after-session critiques enabled the researcher to focus on the effects peer response has on students' understanding of writing problems within particular sessions. Thus, elements in the instructional process such as lectures or teacher feedback on writing that could have influenced the students' performance in critiquing writing were minimized.

2. Audio-taping of peer response sessions

All four peer response groups were tape-recorded so that none of them would feel singled out for the study. The leader was in charge of the tape-recording. The tape-recordings were analyzed to reveal the students' performance in critiquing writing and group interaction.

3. Audio-taping of interviews of students' reactions to peers' responses and their revision processes

Insiders' views are very important to qualitative researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Besides interpreting the talk in peer response groups from an etic perspective (as researcher), the researcher elicited the students' (insiders') views on peer response groups to provide the emic perspective. An audio-taped interview, hereafter referred to as a reaction
interview, was made the day after each group session. At this interview, each of the four case study students was asked about her reactions to each of her peers' comments. Before the researcher asked questions, she refreshed the student's memory by summarizing the comments the student received. Such stimulation of recall is considered important by Tomlinson (1984). The students also had their first drafts in front of them for reference. In this way, the data were less likely to suffer from the effects of memory loss, memory distortion, inclusion of relevant past experiences, and rationalization (Ericcson & Simon, 1980). Also by asking for detailed information, it is hoped that the students would give truthful responses instead of socially acceptable ones (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). After the revision of the first draft, each of the students was asked about how she used her peers' comments. (Such an interview is hereafter referred to as a revision interview.) The students were interviewed individually so that they would feel more comfortable expressing feelings about their group members.

4. Learning logs

The students were required to write a total of ten learning logs. The value of learning logs has been observed by Coleman (1984) and Urzua (1987). Logs 1 through 6 were written in the first semester, and Logs 6 through 10 in the second. In Log 1 the students reported their preconception
about peer response, past experience with group work, writing attitudes, and past revision patterns. In Log 2 they freewrote about their experience with writing and revision. In Logs 3 and 4, the students wrote about the experience of doing Assignments 2 and 3. They also talked about their revision process and performance in critiquing writing. For Log 5, they painted a portrait of each of their group members by talking about their experience in working with them during peer response sessions. Log 6 was the students' self portrait about their experience in the group. Log 7 was a report on their past writing experience, causes of their difficulty in writing, and future plans for writing. Log 8 reported their feelings about critique sheets and their perception about the benefit of listening to their peers critique writing. Log 9 reported their feelings about using English to discuss writing and their evaluation of themselves as critiquers. Log 10 was a course evaluation that reported the students' feelings about the course, including reactions to peer response and attitudes towards writing.

5. Audio-taping of a focus group discussion

In the second week of the second semester, each group had a 30-minute focus group discussion, a data collection technique recommended by Lederman (1990), to talk about peer response. The students discussed the advantages and disadvantages of peer response and the changes they...
experienced in their writing process. The discussion was led by the group leader.

6. Writing samples

The first and second drafts of all assignments were collected and analyzed to see what revisions were made and how effective they were (see Appendices D & E). The revision made in response to each of the comments from peers was reported. The effectiveness of a revision was evaluated in terms of the extent to which it solved the problem brought up in the corresponding comment, how it fit into the context of the essay, and whether it created new problems. When a revision was reported, the difference between the original passage and the revised version was explained. Evaluations of the revisions were given in descriptive passages which stated the effects achieved by the revisions on the content, structure, clarity, coherence, style, and tone of the writing. Judgements about whether the revisions improved the writing were also reported.

7. Researcher's field notes

During the peer response sessions the researcher observed groups at work and took notes of the nature of the interaction, taking into account both verbal and nonverbal activities. The researcher tape-recorded and took notes of her one-on-one conferences with the students, since her feedback also shaped their performance in critiquing writing. She also took retrospective notes of class
activities immediately after they were finished. Relevant documents such as the syllabus, lesson plans, and class handouts were kept for reference.

8. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to collect information on the students' use of Chinese and English during peer response sessions and their feelings about it (see Appendix F).

Analysis of data accompanied data collection, and formative conclusions developed in the process provided guidance for subsequent data gathering. The research process remained flexible and could accommodate accidental factors that dictated change in the direction of data collection.

Data from the various sources mentioned above generated a wealth of information that produced insights into the complex workings of a peer response group. The etic and emic perspectives they reflected created depth for the study.
Chapter 4

A Case Study of An-Lin: A Compliant Reviser

An-Lin was a good-natured 19-year-old sophomore majoring in English. She was gregarious, and was always doing things and going places with friends. She also took part in many extracurricular activities. Since she was a coordinator for a school club that often organized lectures by scholars or visits to orphanages or the like, she was constantly busy. Interested in the roles women play in the Taiwanese society, she attended lectures and read books about women's issues. She was rarely absent from classes unless she was ill or behind in assignments for other classes. She was attentive in class and turned in most of her assignments on time. She would not allow herself to get a grade lower than B minus. She was very friendly with the researcher throughout the year and tried to be helpful with the research.

An-Lin as a Writer

An-Lin was one of the weakest writers in a class of fifteen students. Her written English was often inexact, very much like her speech. She wrote with a limited vocabulary and simple sentence patterns. Her ideas were not particularly original and they tended to be very general. She had a random writing style; that is, when writing first drafts, she simply put down whatever came to her mind and would stop writing instantly when the minimum requirement of
two pages was met, with little consideration for structural completeness (2nd reaction interview, hereafter referred to as Reaction 2). Such a style persisted throughout the course. According to her, the major problem in her writing was a small vocabulary (Reaction 4). In her freshman year, she had made only surface level changes when revising. In the first week of the course she said revision was very important and she wanted to spend more time on it (Log 1).

An-Lin seemed to like writing even though she had little confidence in her ability (Log 1). She felt a little embarrassed about presenting her essays during the peer response sessions because she sensed that she did not write as well as Man-Hua or Cha-Yang, other members of her group. However, she still retained interest in writing throughout the second semester. She said, "[in the future] I will like to do some English writing. Even I just write a journal or keep a diary in English" (Log 7). (The student's language will always be presented in its original form, as in this quote. Any clarification added by the researcher will be in brackets []). Revision also became more enjoyable for her (Exit interview).

An-Lin's Experience with Peer Response

An-Lin had never had any experience with peer response in a classroom situation before, but she had positive expectations (Log 1). After her first experience with it, she felt happy. She said, "I appreciate it [peer response]
very much because they see the points which I did not notice or I noticed but I did not know how to revise it" (Log 2). At the end of the first semester, she felt she had received much help on content and organization, as well as some on word usage. She also thought she had learned how to critique writing from her group. Throughout the year she felt good about peer response, even though toward the end of the course she became slightly bored with the routine (Exit interview). To her, it had been very helpful in facilitating revision and she would like to do it again next year (Exit interview).

An-Lin was good-natured and was never offended by negative comments. In Session 4, Man-Hua made one blunt criticism about her vocabulary: "Some words are repeat several times, such as 'always,' and that means your writing is poor and your vocabulary is too limited." When asked how she felt about this criticism, An-Lin laughed and said, "That is a fact. What she said is very suitable for I and Sho-Li. Because we two have the feeling that our vocabulary are too poor" (Reaction 4). She also said, "I never got angry no matter what kind of opinions they gave me. I thought that I should receive broader ways of opinions so that I can get improvement" (Log 6). Throughout the course, she never perceived of criticism as an intrusion on her authority as a writer (Log 9).
She had only two complaints about peer response. One was the amount of time she had to spend reading others’ drafts. The other was that one group member tended to turn in her drafts right before the peer response sessions, not giving her sufficient time to read them. She also said under such circumstances the interaction in the group sometimes stalled because they did not know what to say (Exit interview).

According to An-Lin, all the peer response sessions were very helpful and she always revised according to her peers’ comments (Reaction 2, 4, 6, 7, 9). She reported,

> [T]he critique sheets are the most important source for my revision. When I had to revise my draft, I would read all the critique sheets and think about what they told me. Sometimes I would read the critique sheets more than twice until I really got the idea about what I want to write (Log 3).

In fact she had so much trust in her peers in the first part of the course that she was shocked when the researcher disagreed with a comment Cha-Yang made in Session 3. The comment concerned how to quote materials from other authors in a synthesis paper. An-Lin asked the researcher,

> "{Really? Can they [my peers] say something wrong? I don’t know how to write this paper, and I thought they must always be right. Does that mean we cannot always depend on them?}"

(3rd revision interview, hereafter referred to as Revision 3). (When the student’s speech is in Chinese, it will be translated and enclosed in braces {}.) Still, her trust in her peers grew over time.

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This trust caused her to agonize whenever her own intentions as a writer conflicted with her peers’ suggestions. During Session 7, Cha-Yang said that the quotations she used in her research paper were not striking enough to quote. An-Lin explained that she had used these quotations because they contained interesting ideas, even though the language was not striking. However, she felt pressured to accept Cha-Yang’s opinion. With a pained expression on her face, An-Lin said, "{I don’t want to change them. But if I don’t, I feel I am not doing the right thing}" (Reaction 7). Toward the end of the course An-Lin actually felt more pressured to incorporate her peers’ suggestions. She said, "At the end we are more closer, and I will think that is a little pressure from them" (Exit interview).

An-Lin’s idea of a helpful comment was one that gave clear instructions about how to revise, or perhaps even demonstrated what to write, instead of one that just gave general guidelines or only mirrored back the effect of her writing. This was reflected in the way she felt about the comments her peers made about her film review. She said, Cha-Yang’s comment was very vague. She said I should talk about [film] production, but she did not specify how to talk about it. Man-Hua’s suggestion was more clear. She talked what a good actor should be, and that I could talk about the weakness of the movie, the actor, the acting. . . . When they suggest to add some detail in content, I would like them to give me some example, not just say "talk about the weakness of the movie." That’s too general. I can’t understand very well (Revision 2).
By the end of this course, she experienced some changes in her revision patterns. She said,

I like to make many changes in my writing now. [In] freshman [year] we just correct what our teacher tell us, for example, the word is wrong, we change the word. But we don’t change a lot. This year if the topic we choose is not good, maybe we change a topic, or we change a whole paragraph. I think for this semester we change a lot places (Exit interview).

Since An-Lin had only done surface-level revisions in the past, her strong inclination to revise on a large scale throughout this course indicated a significant growth for a basic writer. She also felt it was easier to write and revise than before, and her enjoyment in writing also increased (Exit interview). Her perception of her writing problem changed too. She used to think her major difficulty was of a lower-level nature, such as a limited vocabulary, but by the middle of the second semester she came to sense her deficiency in higher-level skills, such as the choice of an appropriate topic. She reported, "[H]ow to choose a ‘good’ topic which means new and interesting is the most difficult thing for me" (Log 8).

One thing that did not change much was her attitudes toward ownership of her text. She did not seem to see herself as the owner. Thus she never felt her peers’ comments hurt her sense of authority over her writing or affected her style (Revision 5). In fact she did not think she had a style. She said, "I didn’t lose my style. In fact I want to change" (Focus group).
Even though An-Lin enjoyed peer response and made considerable progress in her writing, she did not seem to know how to interpret what was happening to her. On the one hand she felt that her revision had become easier and her grades had also gotten better, but on the other hand she did not know completely what she was doing. When asked about how she felt about the changes in her revision habits, she said, "[I] change what I have written more and more, I don't know why. Sometimes I would change a new topic. Maybe that is not good" (Exit interview). At the end of the course, when asked who she thought of as her audience when she wrote, she said, "I would not think of that who would be my audience before I wrote, because I just wrote what I thought of" (Exit interview). Apparently she still had little sense of audience at the end of this class. The researcher suspected that the large-scale revisions she did throughout the course were probably the result of compliance rather than a growing audience awareness.

It is not surprising to find that the revision habits An-Lin acquired in this course did not last. Six months after the course ended, she was found to have returned to her old revision style. Since her present composition teacher does not use peer response and does not require much revision either, she rarely revises, and if she does, she makes only small changes. She said this was partly due to the heavier course load in her junior year and partly due to
the light demands of the teacher. Even she herself found
the difference between her present performance and that of
the previous year to be odd. She said, "It's so ridiculous. I revised so little now" (Post-study
interview).

An-Lin liked her group very much. She especially
appreciated its composition. She said,

I really cherished the time we are together, because it
is almost that each one's environment [background] of
our group member are different. There are a Hong Kong
girl, a junior student, and a classmate to be my peers,
so we can share our different opinions. And we have
more various opinions than other groups. I also hope
that we are not only the group peers, but also become
the good friends (Log 5).

She felt that she could talk truthfully and freely, not only
because there were only four people in the group, and also
because she felt comfortable with them. She said the
atmosphere was relaxed and became even more so as time went
by (Exit interview). At the end of the year, she also felt
closer to her group members, who she perceived as helpers
instead of judges of her writing. She said, "I am lucky to
have these group peers. Not only because they are helpful
for my writing, but also because they are friendly and
interesting" (Log 5). Her trust in them as friends and
responders grew because they encouraged her to do her best
and helped her with her writing (Exit interview).

An-Lin's Perception of Herself as a Critiquer

An-Lin did not like to write peer critique sheets
because it was hard work. However, she felt they were
necessary. She did not have much confidence in her ability to critique her peers' writing. After Session 3, she stated, "I don't think I can give my group members good comments, because I myself don't know how to write. In this way, I read their writing without finding any fault" (Log 4). She believed the comments she produced were too general, and she felt embarrassed and frustrated when comparing her performance with her peers'. She said, "Sometimes I will think my opinion was not so so important, {not very useful}, because- like Man-Hua, she can find- {like division of sentences, or what is wrong with a certain paragraph, but I can't}" (Reaction 4).

An-Lin's lack of confidence also showed in her interviews. On two occasions when repeatedly questioned by the researcher about why she made certain comments, she began to waver (Reaction 7, 8). For example, during Session 7, both Sho-Li and Man-Hua felt that Cha-Yang's paragraphs were unconnected. Later An-Lin also said that Cha-Yang's ideas were scattered about. When the researcher asked her twice why she thought so, she began to doubt herself and decided to take back what she said. [t=teacher, a=An-Lin, txt del=text deleted]

  t: Did you really see her ideas jumping around?
  a: Uh huh. [txt del]
  t: Did you really see that or were you affected by them [peers]?
a: a little affected by them. Each of her paragraphs is independent. In fact, I think it alright too. This is just my personal feeling.

One month into the first semester, she said she could comment on content but not on grammar or word usage (Reaction 2). Toward the middle of the second semester, she began to think she could say something about organization, but still not about grammar or word usage (Reaction 7). However, even though An-Lin did not have much confidence in her critiques, by the end of the course she felt that her performance had improved. She sensed that she was making more and longer comments on organization and content (Exit interview).

When critiquing her own writing, she said she focused on content: "Since I was the author, I know what I lack of. . . . So I can do my own critique sheet easily on content." She did not think she could point out her own language errors very well (Log 3). In general, she was not satisfied with her performance. She felt what she needed was others' opinions, and thus there was no need to do her best in critiquing her own papers (Log 8).

It was her opinion that the experience in critiquing her peers' texts and her own did not reinforce each other. She believed the two abilities involved were unrelated, since she and her peers had different writing styles and thus different writing problems. According to her, even if she could point out her peers' mistakes, she still could not
point out her own. Basically she did not trust her ability
to critique writing and felt that she learned most when she
listened to her peers do the critiquing (Log 9).

Performance in Critiquing Writing

An-Lin’s ability to critique was revealed through the
strategies she employed in responding to her peers’ writing
and the comments she recorded on her critique sheets.

Strategies Used in Responding to Texts

The students’ performances as responders are divided
into two parts: (a) their performances in self-initiated
episodes, in which they discussed their own comments on
their critique sheets, and (b) their performances in peer-
initiated episodes, in which peers’ comments are discussed.
An episode is a series of speaking turns taken to discuss a
single issue in the writing. In the discussion of
critiquing strategies, the researcher looked into the
approaches the students adopted to respond to writing in
self-initiated episodes. Peer-initiated episodes were
excluded. The reason was that in the latter episodes more
than one student contributed to the discussion and they
piggybacked on one another’s ideas, thus making it difficult
to isolate the range of strategies a student would use when
approaching a writing issue. The strategies are categorized
as follows. They were based on Benesch’s study (1985).

1. Praising. Praising is positive acknowledgement of
the writer’s efforts or purpose. There are two types. The
first, coded as *Brief praise*, is done succinctly. For example, "I think Sho-Li's article is very interesting." In the second type, coded as *Substantiated praise*, the responder not only points out the merit of the writing but also substantiates the praise by stating the effects the writing achieved. An example is "I like the introduction because she uses an example to attract the readers."

2. **Mirroring.** Mirroring is reflecting back to the author what the responder has read. There are three types. The most direct kind, coded as *Mirroring (pointing)*, is to repeat part of the text to point out the segment of the text to be discussed. The second type, coded as *Mirroring (restating)*, paraphrases or summarizes all or part of what the author wrote as a way of pointing out the aspect to be discussed or showing the responder's understanding of the text. An example is a statement about a film review: "Cha-Yang is putting her emphasize [emphasis] on theme and symbolic images of the character, like she told us, flower symbolicize the woman." The third type, coded as *Mirroring (Effects)*, states the effects the writing achieved, and it is considered the highest form of *Mirroring*. Mirroring is always used in combination with *Praising, Responding, or Helping*.

3. **Responding.** Responding is the discussion of writing problems. The first type, coded as *Responding (problem identification)*, points out the problem briefly, as
in "The introduction is a little too long." The second, coded as Responding (problem analysis), points out the problem and analyzes the nature of the problem. An example is Cha-Yang’s discussion of a quote in Man-Hua’s research paper, which was used to describe Michelangelo’s sculpture Moses.

“There was no other works to be seen, whether ancient or modern, which could rival it.” When I read this quoting, I expect that some very special words to describe the statue Moses. But the quoting here is too general. Yes, I have this feeling when you— I use one sentence to describe Sho-Li, "Oh, she is gorgeous, she is beautiful." But you didn’t really know what is the special quality of Sho-Li has. So I expected some specific description. Why you choose this quoting?

4. Helping. Helping is giving advice on how to solve writing problems. There are two types. The first gives the writer a solution to a problem without going into detail, and it is coded as Helping (suggestion). An example is "You should include the main points in your introduction." The second not only makes a suggestion but also collaborates with the author by describing in detail what the author could do, or demonstrates how to solve the problem by sharing the text the responder herself would have written down, or offers more than one specific way to revise. Such help is coded as Helping (collaboration), as in Cha-Yang’s demonstration of how Sho-Li could correct the logical problem in a sentence.

"Someone is lonely but rich man, no matter how wonderful thing he owns, he lack of friendship and love, he would not be happy." Could you correct the
sentence? I have a suggestion. It's that "if someone is rich but lonely . . . ."

An-Lin's use of these four strategies is quantified in the following table. In quantification, all the speech that falls under a certain strategy within an episode is counted as one instance.

Table 1

An-Lin's Responding Strategies: Types and Instances of Use

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<tr>
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<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Restating</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>63</td>
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</table>
As the Table shows, Helping was the most frequent strategy, closely followed by Mirroring and Praising. Responding was the least frequent. The slightly higher priority An-Lin put on Helping may indicate that she perceived making suggestions as an important duty for a responder. The low frequency of Responding may reflect her weaker ability for analyzing writing problems. As the course progressed, the numbers and types of strategies she used generally increased. Session 7 was an exception. In this session her performance seemed to have regressed, perhaps because it involved research papers, the most difficult type of writing for her. In general, however, An-Lin improved noticeably during the course.

An-Lin's suggestions became more elaborate over time. In the first semester her suggestions were brief, but in the second they became more detailed and concrete, as indicated by the three instances of Helping (collaborating) in Sessions 6 and 9. An example is her suggestion to Man-Hua to add an argument in her paper about mercy killing, as shown below.

I think you can add the opinion about human right. And the background of a family may make different decision, such as to maintain a patient's life may cost a lot of money. And that will be a big burden to a middle class family.} And some people will say the patient have the right to be alive. But I think that we must consider the patient's family. So I think maybe you can write something about this. [Helping (Collaborating)]
Although she showed improvement, compared with the others in the group, her suggestions were often the least elaborate.

Initially An-Lin’s responses were very suggestion-oriented. In Session 2, her main responses were two suggestions. The two instances of Mirroring in that session were actually used just to point out the elements she wanted to make suggestions about. For example, she made the following suggestion on Cha-Yang’s film review about the director’s symbolism.

You say the whole movie is all symbolic meaning, right? [Mirroring (restating)] Maybe you can explain it more clearly. Not only tell us that the flower means the women [Helping (suggestion)].

In Session 4, her responding became slightly more sophisticated. Not only did she continue to combine Mirroring with Helping, but she also incorporated Responding (problem analysis) into one of her suggestions for the first time. In Session 6, her suggestions became even richer since she combined all her suggestions with Mirroring and Responding. An example of her Helping (collaborating) strategy is as follows.

You divide your article into three paragraphs, introduction, body, and conclusion [Mirroring (restating)]. But I think the three paragraphs are long. And they look like the same. All are body parts. So your introduction I think- it’s- There are too many things in the introduction [Responding (problem identification)]. Yeah, so I think maybe you should read your introduction and tell which can in this part and which can divide a new paragraph. And I think you can develop body parts more briefly. Divide the two paragraphs- this paragraph into two parts, one is negative, and the other is your own opinions [Helping (collaborating)].
However, her performance regressed a little at Sessions 7 and 9 since she did so in only three out of six instances. 

**Mirroring** is the second most frequent strategy. Throughout the semester she never attempted to discuss the effects of the writing when using this strategy. She always mirrored at the factual level by pointing to the text, paraphrasing it, or summarizing what the author did. The previous example demonstrates this rather well.

As for **Praising**, she started using it in Session 4, after the instructor reminded the class to do so. In the beginning her praise was brief, but in the second semester some of it was substantiated with short descriptions of the effects the writing achieved. For example, she praised the use of an example: "I think you use a famous example, Magic Johnson, and which can tell us to notice the problem and grab our attention to that." There seemed to be slight improvement in her praising performance.

The **Responding** strategy was not used until Session 4, and in the second semester its use increased dramatically, indicating a significant improvement in her ability to address writing problems. However, since the instances of **Responding (problem identification)** far outnumbered those of **Responding (problem analysis)**, she did not seem to be able to analyze problems in detail. She did so only twice. An example is her discussion of a problem in Cha-Yang's definition paper. She told Cha-Yang that the discussion of
self defense should not be limited to cases that involved child abuse. In her inexact language, An-Lin tried to present her opinion. [c=Cha-Yang, m=Man-Hua]

a: Maybe tell more material, or different {cases}.

c: You mean different situation? What do you mean?

m: When we have to use self defense.

a: Because when Man-Hua say we can discuss something else, and I think not only children need to self-need to this thing about self defense. There are also something else like {employees} -

m: {Employees} kill boss.

a: Not kill boss. In some situation they need to protect their self, yeah to be- [Responding (analyzing problem)].

m: Actually when someone rob you, you have to self defense.

a: Yeah, yeah.

m: It's a kind of situation.

In Sessions 7 and 9, the number of instances in which she used Responding decreased a little. She briefly mentioned a total of six problems without analyzing them. A typical example of a Responding (problem identification) strategy is her attempt to tell Sho-Li that in one paragraph in her argumentation paper the pro argument (that cohabitation allows people to get to know each other before marriage) and the con argument (that cohabitation breaches social mores) were in fact irrelevant. Again An-Lin was trying to state the problem in her inadequate English.

And in the third paragraph, the second con opinion- Yeah, you say many just about the social moral, but
this is not related to what you mention before. Yeah, because you just say we can understand the other people before marriage. And then you talk about the social moral. This- these are different things [Responding (problem identification)]. So maybe you can divide these two parts.

As the course progressed, An-Lin seemed to become less suggestion-oriented and felt more comfortable about just pointing out writing problems and letting the authors produce the solutions themselves. In Sessions 4 and 6, in all six instances in which she brought up problems, she always followed them with suggestions. However, in Sessions 7 and 9, she did so in only 3 of 6 instances.

Even though An-Lin’s total number of instances in which she used a strategy was smaller than that of the others in the group and her performance was also less sophisticated, she did make steady progress over time.

**Peer Critiques**

An-Lin’s ability to critique her peers’ texts was reflected by the comments on her before- and after-session peer critiques. Assignment 2 was a special case since the students only wrote critique sheets after the session. The comments on these critique sheets presumably contained opinions that the students formed before and after the session. To give a better picture of the students’ performance at the beginning of the course, comments from this session are included in the following discussion. In this one case, the researcher excluded comments that coincided with those made by others during the session and
treated the rest as before-session comments. (However, the researcher realizes that these comments still may be influenced by the group discussion, and may not represent the opinions the students held before the session.) Comments on language errors were also excluded.

The comments are categorized according to which aspects of the writing are addressed. They are as follows.

1. **Comments on Content.** These are responses concerning the ideas expressed in the writing. Usually these comments evaluate the validity, development, and focus of these ideas, and sometimes they suggest ideas that could be added. For example, "Her topic is very interesting because she can tell us the difference between Hong Kong girls and Taiwan girls. I'm quite interested in it."

2. **Comments on Structure.** Comments in this category discuss organization (e.g., where certain ideas should be placed), structure (e.g., what the basic elements of an essay should be, the appropriate length of these elements, what an introduction consists of), and format (e.g., how to present text borrowed from other authors). For example, "You divide your article into three paragraphs, but your introduction and conclusion are too long and look like body part. Maybe you can rewrite a conclusion."

3. **Comments on Style:** Comments on Style concern the adoption of certain rhetorical devices (e.g., anecdotes) or manners of expression (e.g., tone, voice, linguistic
manipulation) to achieve certain effects. For example, "It is good to have a story as the introduction," and "Attitude is not objective enough."

4. **Comments on Clarity and Coherence.** Comments in this category deal with whether the ideas are understandable, logical, or consistent with other segments of the text. For example, "The whole article seems talking about positive changes on your studying, however, in the conclusion, the feeling is negative. They doesn't quite match for each other. Perhaps you can say it in a more positive ways."

5. **General comments.** General comments are responses about the whole essay or a large segment of the text without addressing any specific weakness or strength. For example, "I like your article."

6. **Miscellaneous comments.** This includes comments about the writing process or the teacher's requirements, and other comments that do not fit into the categories above. For example, "Do you have all your five sources in your article [research paper]?"

**Before-session peer critiques.**

Table 2 shows the numbers and types of comments that An-Lin made on her before-session peer critiques. She made a total of 46 comments, an average of 3.1 comments per paper. There was a very obvious increase in the number of comments as the course progressed. The most frequent
Table 2

An-Lin's Comments on Before-Session Peer Critiques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity, etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...comments were about Content, followed by Structure; then Style; and then Clarity and Coherence. She did not make any comments that were categorized as General; apparently she was able to avoid making comments of the least specificity.

There also seemed to be a shift from a preoccupation with content to a broader view of writing characteristics. In the two sessions in the first semester, she seemed to make only comments on Content, with the exception of one comment of praise about clarity. Perhaps content was easier to approach at the early stage of the course. At Session 6 she began to comment on Structure and Style. By Sessions 7 and 9 she made three comments on Clarity and Coherence as...
well. It was at Session 9 that she first tried to identify a problem in coherence.

1. Comments on Content.

An-Lin made 24 comments on Content. Her most frequent strategy was to suggest ideas that could be added to the content, and she made 10 such suggestions. Most of these were made with no justifications, and it seemed they were intended to enrich the content by adding something extra rather than to correct problems with any inadequacy of the content. For example, after reading Sho-Li's paper about her past and present study habits, she said, "In [the] conclusion, maybe you can tell us how you feel after you change your study habits." Since the point of the essay was to compare study habits, there was no need to discuss how she felt about the changes. However, discussion of her feelings might enrich the content. Her second strategy was to offer praise about overall content, and she made eight such comments. The above two types of comments are easy to make since they require only a rough understanding of the texts. For a basic writer like An-Lin, these strategies enabled her to cope with the task of responding when she could not identify specific strengths or weaknesses of the writing.

She made five comments that showed detection of existing problems. Four suggested the need for expanding existing ideas, mostly on the paragraph level. One comment
pointed out a problem with the focus of the whole essay. For example, she made a suggestion on Sho-Li's research paper "How to talk to kids about sex": "Your content is a little too broad, and too general. Maybe you can choose few of them and discuss more deeply." These comments indicate that An-Lin was able to detect some problems and suggest solutions. However, they constituted only a small part of her comments on content.

Two of the 24 comments seemed problematic. Both were caused by a misreading of the text. An example is her comment on Cha-Yang's definition paper "Self-defense": "She did not tell us the real definition or her own definition of self-defense." In fact Cha-Yang's stand was stated in the third person even though it was not developed sufficiently. Since all the other peers discussed their stand in the first person, An-Lin developed the misconception that the author had to state her views with phrases such as "I think. . . ." The formation of such a rigid rule seems to be typical of a basic writer.

Most of An-Lin's comments that detected problems or made suggestions involved revisions of the paragraph- or sub-paragraph level and only two involved the whole text. She did not seem capable of detecting problems of the whole text until Session 7, and then only to a small extent.
2. Comments on Structure.

She made 13 comments on Structure. Her main strategy was to identify paragraph-level problems in structure or format, and she made seven such comments. These comments pointed out that the introduction or the conclusion was missing or too long, or a summary should be in the conclusion. An example is "You divide your article into three paragraph but your introduction and conclusion are too long and look like body parts. Maybe you can rewrite a conclusion."

She made three very general laudatory comments about the overall organization of an essay. Two other comments suggested breaking a paragraph into two. At Session 9, she was finally able to make one comment that detected a problem with the whole text. She pointed out Sho-Li's lack of balance between the pro and con arguments in her argumentation essay: "Your pro and con are not balance. In the third paragraph, you have three pro and two con. And in fourth paragraph and conclusion, what you wrote are all pro. I think you should add some con, and then give pro response to your con."

Her performance showed that she was not quite able to comment on Structure until Session 6. Once she did, she moved from a strong concern for the paragraph (e.g., the need for an introduction) in Sessions 6 and 7 to a concern for both this and the whole text (e.g., the balance of the
pros and cons in an argumentation essay) in Session 9. Only
one of her comments seemed problematic.

3. Comments on Style.

She made no comments on Style until Session 6. She
made five comments in Sessions 6 and 7, all of which were
praise over the effective use of an example or story. For
example, on Cha-Yang's paper about child abuse, she said,
"It is interesting to use a real case as an introduction so
that she can raise our attention." Even though all her
comments were acceptable, her awareness of style was very
limited. Also she was not able to detect problems.

4. Comments on Clarity and Coherence.

Three of her four comments on Clarity and Coherence
were praise about the clarity of the whole essay or a part
of it. Only one of the four comments attempted to identify
a problem, and it did not emerge until Session 9. It was
about the logical connection among the three paragraphs in
the body of Cha-Yang's argumentation paper "A Move to Ban
Bordellos": "It seems no relationship to each paragraph."
However, even this comment was invalid. An-Lin felt that
Cha-Yang's three paragraphs in the body were unconnected
because they each discussed a different aspect of the
prostitution issue: the moral, medical, and economical
aspects. She could not see that the three paragraphs were
connected because they all addressed the same issue. An-Lin
seemed weaker in the area of logic, clarity, and coherence.
In the previous four types of comments, praising was a major component which she used to show support for her group and to cope with the responding task. She made 19 comments of praise, and there was a slight increase in the number of comments of praise as the course progressed. The nature of these comments showed that her strategies were to praise in a general manner about a small number of aspects. She praised the topic as good 7 times, the use of an example or a story as effective 5 times, the overall organization as good 3 times. Such strategies are also a form of "rubber stamping," and they appeared in all the sessions. The remaining four comments were more specific. However, the number of these comments was very small.

After-session peer critiques.

In the following discussion, the before-session comments that were modified after the discussion are coded as Changed comments. The comments produced after the sessions about aspects of the writing which she had not considered before the sessions are coded as New comments.

In Sessions 4, 6, 7, and 9, no Changed comments were recorded. An-Lin made 12 New comments and all of them coincided with the ideas brought up by her peers during the sessions. In Session 2 she wrote five comments on her after-session critiques and all of them also coincided with her peers’ opinions.
The above facts seemed to suggest that the discussion did not stimulate An-Lin to modify her existing opinions about her peers’ essays or form opinions about new aspects of the writing. Rather the sessions functioned as occasions for her to absorb her peers’ opinions. Since the majority of her peers’ comments were valid, she was learning much from her peers.

All the comments on the after-session critiques concerned content. She seemed to hear only comments on Content and shut herself off to other types of comments. Among the 12 comments she copied down, only one was problematic. It was a comment on Cha-Yang’s definition paper on "Self-defense": "Explain your own ideas about self-defense in conclusion." An-Lin failed to see that Cha-Yang already stated her ideas in the third-person point of view, and she also mistakenly suggested that Cha-Yang discuss her definition in the conclusion, instead of in the body of the text.

**Self Critiques**

An-Lin’s performance in critiquing her own writing and the impact of the group discussions on her performance were reflected in her before- and after-session self critiques.

**Before-session self critiques.**

The types of comments An-Lin made on her before-session self critiques are shown in Table 3. (Like the other students, in Session 2 she did not write her before-session...
critique. The five comments on her after-session critique all coincided with the ideas brought up by her peers during the session. Therefore it was assumed that she was unable to make any comments on her own before the session.)

Table 3
An-Lin’s Comments on Before-Session Self Critiques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure, etc.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An-Lin made an average of 2.2 comments for each assignment, fewer than the 3.1 she made about each of her peers’ papers. The element most frequently commented on was Content, followed by Structure; and then Clarity and Coherence. There were no comments on Style. Comments on Content dominated, just as they did in her peer critiques.

Three of her comments on Content were explanations of why the writing was unsatisfactory, instead of evaluations of her texts. For example, in Session 7 she explained why
her essay had no title, "I don't give a topic [title] at all, because I did not find an interesting topic [title], so I skipped that." One comment vaguely pointed out things she still needed to add. Only two pointed out a specific approach to developing her content and a problem to be fixed. The former was valuable and could improve the writing significantly. It is a suggestion on her paper about the conflicts between parents and children: "Maybe we can use our own experience to make the composition more interesting." Compared with her peer critiques in which she was able to precisely identify problems in development and focus, An-Lin had very little success with her self critiques on content.

She made four comments on Structure, most of which did not require much textual analysis. In fact two of them were reminders to herself of what she still had to do with the format of her research paper. An example is "I didn't write the page number after quotations." The other two comments were about format or organization. One example is "I need a topic sentence before each paragraph." This shows her rigid belief in the necessity of starting each paragraph with a topic sentence. The fourth comment is a vague suggestion to rework her organization. It seems that in her self critiques she was incapable of pointing out problems as specifically as she did in her peer critiques.
She made one comment on Clarity and Coherence in Session 9: "The main idea of each paragraph is not very clearly. So perhaps I should give a topic sentence." The small number of comment showed that she was weak in this regard, and the nature of this comment again suggested her inflexible belief in topic sentences.

She seemed to be less effective in responding to her own texts than those of her peers. Most of the time she was reminding herself of the things she had to do yet in her second drafts or explain why her writing had certain flaws. She was not able to pinpoint as many problems as she did in her peers' drafts. Often she made vague statements indicating her awareness of some problems. When she made specific suggestions, they often reflected a rigid adherence to some rule.

**After-session self critiques.**

The after-session self critiques show that none of her before-session comments changed. She put down a total of 10 New comments for Assignments 4, 6, 7, and 9, and all of them coincided with the comments made by her peers during the sessions. All the five comments in her after-session critique for Assignment 2 also coincided with her peers' opinions. Apparently the group discussion did not change An-Lin's pre-existing opinions about her own writing and it did not induce her to form new ones either. During the sessions she was just absorbing what her peers said.
Six months after this course ended, An-Lin was interviewed about why none of her before-session comments for her peers' and her own writing were modified and why no new comments were produced after the discussion. She said, "{I did not change my ideas about the writing after the sessions because when I presented them during the discussion, my peers seemed to receive them well. That made me feel my comments were OK. As to why I did not produce new comments after the sessions, I am a very slow reader and it is impossible for me to come up with new ideas even after the discussion. I wrote down my peers' ideas because they seemed good and I wanted to think about them at home.}" Her perception of the quality of her own comments seemed to be determined by her peers' reactions to them, rather than by her own criteria. She appeared to have little confidence in her critiquing competence.

Reactions to Comments for Revision and Her Attitude Toward Ownership of Texts

An-Lin received a total of 32 suggestions. (Comments of praise were excluded because most of them were very general and did not point out specific elements that could be worked on. Also none of the students reacted to them when they revised.) Of these she agreed with 23 (72%), disagreed with 5 (16%), felt unsure about 2 (6%), and failed to understand 2 (6%). At revision, she incorporated 24
(75%) of the comments, indicating that she was very receptive of her peers' opinions.

The way she used the comments on her before-session self critiques showed that she had much more confidence in her peers than in herself. She made eight comments for Assignments 4, 7, and 9. She did not write the before-session critique for Assignment 2, and she changed her topic in Assignment 6, so they were both excluded. There were five comments that coincided with the suggestions brought up by her peers during the sessions, and all of them were incorporated at revision. There were two others that did not coincide with peer comments, and neither were carried out at revision. (A sixth comment in this category is not discussed here because it was too vague and it could not be determined whether it was incorporated or not.) Apparently An-Lin put her peers' opinions before her own.

The way An-Lin dealt with the conflicts that arose when others disagreed with her ideas about writing also showed a weak sense of ownership of her texts. A struggle over ownership often ended with her capitulation. There were eight instances in which conflicts arose. In five of them, she compromised and revised according to her peers' suggestions. In another she wanted to follow her peers' suggestion but was prevented from doing so for the lack of time. In the other two instances, the conflict was less intense because another student sided with her. In both
these cases she stayed with her original opinions. Overall she was a very compliant reviser.

An example of her willingness to compromise was her decision to delete a problematic segment of text rather than deal with it in some other way. In Session 7, Sho-Li pointed out a contradiction between a claim in Paragraph 5, that women ignore their emotional needs in the search for fulfillment in career and the statement in the conclusion that women still have emotional needs and they need family. An-Lin did not think there was a contradiction. However, without making any effort to save her writing, at revision she deleted the problematic segment in Paragraph 5 in order to appease Sho-Li. When asked why she deleted the text in question, she replied that it was because her peers sensed a contradiction. When asked again if she thought her revision eliminated the problem, she said, "I don't know" (Revision 9).

The comments An-Lin received were mostly valid and pointed out most of her major problems. Only three were problematic. An-Lin’s decisions about whether to incorporate suggestions or not seemed to be quite valid. She never incorporated a suggestion that seemed inappropriate to the researcher. Of the five comments she rejected, four of her decisions were reasonable. These four comments suggested ideas that could be added to the content. An example is Sho-Li’s suggestion to talk about the
similarities between parents and children in their attitudes towards money. An-Lin rejected this suggestion because she wanted to focus on the differences.

The one comment that she incorrectly turned down concerned structure. This comment suggested that she combine each pro argument with its corresponding con argument into a paragraph in her argumentation paper. She rejected it because the sample paper given by the researcher left them as separate paragraphs. However, since An-Lin had extremely short pro and con sections, she should have combined them. An-Lin's inflexibility may have been a reflection of her strong tendency to submit to authority. She was unsure about two suggestions, which showed her lack of knowledge about the format and style of research papers.

Revision Performance

Throughout the year, An-Lin was very much inclined to rewrite her drafts on a large scale and on the global level. In Essays 2, 4, 7, and 9 only a total of ten sentences remained intact. In Essay 6, she even changed her topic. The lengths of most of her drafts also grew tremendously. The increases in the number of words for Assignments 2, 4, 6, and 9 are as follows (with the percentages of increases in parentheses): 333-->537 (61%); 480-->956 (99%); 284-->514 (81%); and 518-->753 (45%). Essay 7 was the only one that became shorter: 818-->604 (-36%), a result of lack of
time for rewriting (Reaction 7). The extent of the revision for Essay 9 was also much smaller than in the other essays, perhaps due to the help she received from her class at the prewriting stage. For a basic writer who only used to make surface-level changes, such large-scale rewriting represents a tremendous growth.

An-Lin's revisions will be examined from two aspects: changes she made in response to peers' suggestions and those she made on her own.

**Peer-Initiated Revisions**

In her Essay 2, An-Lin wrote a film review about the movie *Dances with Wolves*. She received seven suggestions and made many large-scale revisions in response to five. The idea that Indians are not uncivilized was expanded into a full paragraph. Two paragraphs were added to discuss the scenery in the film and a flaw of the movie (weak acting).

The first is shown below.

> In this movie, what we saw was very magnificent. Endless meadow, real wild scenery, and large number of buffalos. After such a long time of seeing so many movies produced in Hollywood, I was very surprised that there should be some one who would like to shoot a film in this way. The commonest scene in most movies is house because it is the easiest scene. When they need some special scenes, they use visual effects. But in this movie, we saw real animals, (the horse, the wolf, and the buffalos.) and real scenery- the meadow. Thes movie opened and expanded the setup of movies.

Cha-Yang suggested that the last paragraph which related the Indians' situation to that of the aborigines in Taiwan should be de-emphasized a little. In response, An-Lin
shortened the paragraph and also changed its focus slightly to fit it better with the other paragraphs. An-Lin also organized the discussion of the scene, the theme, and the similar situation in Taiwan in the order suggested by Cha-Yang. Most of her revisions were positive. The content became much richer and more interesting, and the ideas were more fully developed. The paragraphing also improved. In the first draft Paragraph 2 consisted of a few ideas (about theme, impact of the movie, etc.) that were underdeveloped. In the second draft each paragraph of the body contained only one central idea.

However, there were a few problems with the revisions. In the last paragraph which discussed the situation of the aborigines in Taiwan, she devoted too much space to describing the situation and failed to integrate it with her evaluation of the movie. She still did not have a conclusion. In addition, the second draft had some structural problems that were created by the addition and expansion of ideas. In the first draft she had an introduction but in the second it was deleted. The first draft centered around two or three ideas and coherence was not a problem. With the addition of many paragraphs, transitions became necessary but were not provided. The expanded Paragraph 2 (about the theme) should have been followed by Paragraph 5 (about the aborigines in Taiwan), since they were about the same topic. An-Lin seemed to have
revised dutifully according to her peers’ suggestions with no awareness of the structural changes arising from her revisions.

In her Assignment 4, she wrote a comparison and contrast paper titled "What Difference between Parents and Children." She received nine comments and incorporated five. Most of her revisions were very positive. An-Lin incorporated her own experience and made the writing more personal and appealing. A personal anecdote about her conflict with her mother replaced the straightforward but plain introduction. In Paragraph 5 another anecdote about the different views held by her grandmother and her mother was added to show how parents and children can never understand each other. This fit smoothly into the theme and reinforced the conclusion. The overly general discussion in the body concerning parents’ and children’s ideas about how to use time and money and how to behave was replaced with specific examples of parents’ and children’s likes and dislikes and their mentalities. The conclusion was made clearer through the addition of two sentences to summarize the differences between parents and children. She occasionally replaced the overused word "children" with "youngsters" or "kids" to achieve variety in vocabulary.

However, some revisions were not very effective or even caused new problems. The anecdote in the first paragraph had 305 words and was too long for an essay that contained
only 956 words. Also the cause of the conflict was not stated clearly enough to lead into the discussion in the body about parents' and children's different ideas. The topic sentences she added in Paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 were not very successful. Paragraphs 5 and 6 should have been combined because they carried the same theme, and they should have been condensed and employed as the conclusion. Most of An-Lin's difficulty had to do with structure, clarity, and coherence.

Her Assignment 6 was a definition paper titled "Study." She received three comments. In response to a comment that the topic was not interesting and therefore should be changed, An-Lin switched to a new one: "College Stress." Even though the topic was changed, the principles behind the comments she received still applied, and An-Lin clearly revised according to them. In terms of development and structure, the second draft was an improvement. The ideas were more fully developed and she also had a conclusion, which was missing in the first draft.

However, it was uncertain whether the second topic was more worthwhile than the first, which the researcher believed had the potential of being developed into an interesting essay. In response to a comment that in the first draft she did not devote enough space to defining, An-Lin discussed in detail the three sources of stress for most college students. However, she did not define the concept
of "college stress." As far as the task of defining a concept is concerned, the second draft was actually not as good as the first one, which presented some definitions of "Study," even though sketchy. An-Lin appeared to be so overwhelmed by all her peers' suggestion to change the topic (Reaction 6) that she did not even consider reworking her original one. Her revision efforts were so concentrated on correcting the topic choice problem that she had forgotten to retain the most important element in a definition paper, i.e., the definition.

Assignment 7 was a research paper titled "Women Are Changing." An-Lin made a major mistake by selecting a broad topic and made the matter worse by basing her essay on five articles which were not closely related, even though they were all about modern women (e.g., men's lack of respect for women, language style in literary works by women writers). She received seven suggestions and incorporated all. Some of her revisions were positive. She deleted the five quotes that Cha-Yang did not think contained striking language worthy of quoting, and she added four new ones that were more appropriate. In the first draft she did not include parenthetical citations for text quoted or paraphrased, but in the second she did. She eliminated eight sentences implying women ignore their emotional needs, which contradicted the conclusion that said women have their emotional needs. An-Lin's personal views about women's
issue were also deleted since Man-Hua told her that the teacher did not want them in the research paper.

However, she also made some ineffective revisions. The topic of her first draft was very broad and the ideas were scattered about. (The content covered women’s change in appearance, their right to pursue both family and career, and men’s attitudes towards women, etc.). In response to Man-Hua’s comment that the topic was too broad, she decided to retitle her paper to read "Modern women’s working situation," instead of narrowing down the content, as she should have. The new title no longer fit the essay. In response to Man-Hua’s comment that the content contained little interesting information, An-Lin deleted the section about changes in women’s appearances and added a paragraph about how women’s language is shaped by men. The revisions made the content more interesting, but it also made the content even broader and the ideas more unconnected. Another problematic revision was the revision of the anecdote, which served as the introduction. The anecdote was about An-Lin’s conflict with a male student who could not accept women as his equals. In response to a comment that the anecdote was unclear and irrelevant to the ideas in the body, she expanded it into two paragraphs. This lengthened introduction (209 words) actually created a structural problem because it was too long for a draft that had only 604 words. The clarity improved, but it still did
not connect with the main ideas in the body very well. In addition, the new draft did not have a conclusion. The second draft still had problems from the first draft, such as mixing ideas in a paragraph and failing to provide transitions. Before revising, she considered changing her topic but decided not to, due to the lack of time (Revision 7).

Assignment 9 was an argumentation paper titled "Quit or Not." It was about whether mothers should quit their jobs for child rearing. She received six comments and incorporated four. Some revisions were positive. She expanded the two sentences in Paragraph 7 into seven about the effectiveness of mothers as teachers of young children. She deleted a problematic sentence and expanded another one to make its meaning clearer. In general, the revisions made the second draft slightly more fluent and clearer.

She also made some revisions that were a little problematic. In response to Cha-Yang’s suggestion to write a summary of the main arguments of the essay in the introduction, she wrote one, but it was unclear and did not connect well with the preceding and following sentences. A major structural problem was the large number of extremely short paragraphs of pro and con arguments (10 paragraphs in an essay with 753 words). This problem was pointed out by Sho-Li but An-Lin rejected it. Most of the changes in the paper were of a minor nature. This was probably the
consequence of a brainstorming session prior to writing in which the class helped her generate and organize ideas for the paper. An-Lin faithfully used most of the ideas produced by the class and wrote them in almost the same order as transcribed on the blackboard.

On the whole, in the five assignments, An-Lin made 24 revisions in response to her peers' comments: 16 on Content; 4 on Structure; 2 on Style; and 2 on Clarity and Coherence. Clearly her major efforts were put into content revisions, and she was also most successful with them. The revisions she was unsuccessful with often required whole-text-level changes whose success demanded a sense of focus or knowledge about a certain genre. She seemed to have more difficulty with format, organization, clarity, logic, and coherence. In her content revisions, there was an overall shift in the revisions from the paragraph level to the whole-text level.

**Self-Initiated Revisions**

An-Lin's second drafts also contained both higher- and lower-level changes that she initiated. Most of these changes brought about improvement. In Essay 2 she expanded two sentences about movie production into a paragraph. She also deleted all but one idea in a paragraph and developed it more fully. In Essay 4 she deleted a paragraph about parents' and children's attitudes toward choice of friends, since she could not develop it fully. In addition, she
changed the title into a more interesting one: "Why don't you listen to me?" In Essay 9 she added transitions, rephrased some sentences to clarify meaning, and deleted an irrelevant sentence in the conclusion. Clearly An-Lin was able to make substantive changes on her own. This was a significant change since in the past she made only surface level revisions.

**Summary**

An-Lin's experience with peer response was very positive. She felt peers' comments helped her critique, and revision also became more enjoyable for her over time. Throughout the year she retained her interest in writing even though she had little confidence in her ability. She liked her group.

Her critiquing strategies improved considerably during the year. The strategy she used most frequently was making suggestions for revision, followed by restating what the authors did, praising, and then discussing writing problems. As the course progressed, the strategies she used became more diverse and she used them more often. Her suggestions, discussion of writing problems, and praise became more elaborate. Her suggestions also became more sophisticated since she had learned to combine them with discussions of problems and restatements of what the authors did. Over the course, she became less suggestion-oriented.
The comments on her peer critique sheets improved considerably in quantity and quality over time. Only 4 of her 46 comments seemed problematic. Most of these problematic comments stemmed from misreading of texts or lack of experience with certain genres. The most frequent comments, in decreasing order, were (a) content, (b) organization, structure, and format, (c) style and tone, and (d) clarity, logic, and coherence. Initially she focused on content, but her attention was gradually extended to other issues as well. Throughout the course, she had the tendency to take over others' text by suggesting additional ideas to be added.

When she critiqued her own writing, she still focused on content. She was able to address only content, organization, structure, and format, and rarely commented on other aspects. Compared with her peer critiques, she was much less effective in identifying her own problems. Many of her comments were just explanations for problems in her writing or reminders to herself of things to do in the next drafts. Most of her problematic comments indicated a rigid adherence to rules about writing. In general she had no confidence in her ability to critique writing, and believed that she learned more from listening to her peers critique than from doing it herself.

None of her before-session comments were modified and all the new comments on her after-session peer and self
critiques coincided with her peers' opinions. She seemed to learn a lot about writing from her peers. However, her learning was so passive that she failed to use the group discussions to help her modify her previous opinions or form new ones.

An-Lin was very receptive of her peers' suggestions. She incorporated 75% of them, but sometimes her compliance was detrimental to her learning. She also allowed her peers to shape her content occasionally. When there were conflicts between her ideas about writing and those of her peers, she often relinquished authority over her texts. She also incorporated only those comments on her self critiques that were confirmed by her peers.

Peer response was very effective in helping her revise. She received many valid suggestions and her decisions about incorporating them were mostly acceptable. The quality of her writing improved considerably, even though she sometimes left structural problems unsolved. She was less successful when the revisions required holistic analysis of the texts or knowledge about unfamiliar genres. As the semester progressed, there was a tendency in her revision to move from the paragraph- or sub-paragraph level to the whole-text level. Even though her audience awareness did not increase, she transformed dramatically from making only surface-level changes the year before to making many global-level revisions in this class. However, six months after the
study, with a teacher who did not require much revision, An-Lin had returned to her old revising habits.

Even though her revisions seemed to be the result of compliance, she still learned very much about writing from her peers. She said she would welcome the chance to participate in a peer response class again next year.
Chapter 5

A Case Study of Sho-Li: A Growing Reviser

Sho-Li was a twenty-year-old sophomore in the English Department. She was good-natured and gregarious, and was well-liked by her classmates and the researcher. Aware that the researcher was under much stress because of the demands of teaching and research, she often showed warm concern about the researcher's well-being and sometimes volunteered to run small errands. In class she was quiet but outside she was very talkative and fond of joking with classmates and teachers. She often helped with departmental activities by organizing parties and lectures and enjoyed extracurricular activities. During the first semester she was absent from classes because of sickness a few times and was often unable to hand in her assignments on time. Toward the end of the first semester she improved in this respect.

Sho-Li as a Writer

Sho-Li was one of the weaker writers in her group. She wrote with a very small vocabulary, rarely experimented with complicated syntactical structures, and often made mistakes in word usage and grammar. The content of her writing was usually not very original, and this was particularly true with her definition and argumentation papers. Her research paper, which was much more interesting and sophisticated, was an exception, perhaps because she based it on ideas she collected from professional journals and books.
In the beginning of the course, Sho-Li had a strong apprehension about writing because she felt severely handicapped by a small vocabulary. She said, "Sometimes it's difficult to express myself correctly. It discourages me a lot" (Log 2). Throughout the course she reiterated this concern with language (Logs 2, 6, 7). This lack of confidence sometimes made her feel embarrassed when she felt her writing was over-praised. During Session 4, Cha-Yang praised her writing a few times, and Sho-Li laughed. She said, "I felt funny about her compliments. Because my article is very simple. She said 'well done.' I feel I don't deserve them." Her lack of confidence also often led her to remain quiet when the group critiqued her drafts, particularly in the first semester. She said,

"If you defend yourself, you must feel your draft is quite good. . . . But I am not happy with what I wrote. . . . So when they gave me suggestions, I fully understood what they said. So I did not argue with them (Reaction 2)."

However, she still kept her motivation to learn to write (Log 1).

In the beginning of the first semester, she said her conception of revision was to change both the structure and language errors of an essay. However, in the past she mainly corrected language errors when revising. She also depended on her teacher's cues for revision and revised only when required to. Sometimes she even failed to revise because of laziness (Log 1).
Sho-Li’s Experience with Peer Response

Sho-Li had no prior experience with peer response. However, she had a positive attitude toward it at the beginning. She said,

I think peers can help me in content and organization, it is because they can suggest me some point of view that I neglect in my papers. Besides, they can also give me advice about their feeling after reading my article (Log 1).

After Session 2, when asked to compare the teacher’s and her peers’ comments, she said she did not feel as much pressure to accept the latter. Since she had only one teacher but three peers, she believed she could get more comments from her peers. She never sensed any discomfort about having her writing critiqued by her equals instead of the teacher. She said her peers’ comments might be more detailed but perhaps not as sound as the teacher’s. Consequently, she thought it was good to have both (Reaction 2).

She was never embarrassed by criticism on her writing (Reaction 4), and she never felt that her authority as a writer was denigrated when her peers gave her suggestions (Revision 5). To Cha-Yang’s comment that peer response might cause them to lose their personal style, she responded, "I don’t follow all the comments, I think I’ll choose some of them. I don’t think I lost my style" (Focus group).
Sho-Li always appeared to consider her peers' comments seriously when revising. With the exception of Session 2, toward which she felt peer response was only somewhat useful, all the sessions were very helpful for her (Reaction 2, 4, 6, 7, 9). Throughout the course, she always considered peer response to be more helpful than the teacher's written comments or individual conferences with her (Exit interview). She said to her group, "I really love your comments because that make me easier to revise. Before I had peer response, I think it's hard to me to revise my homework" (Focus group).

Peer response seemed to have positive effects on her writing. In the beginning of the course, she said she wrote whatever came to her mind without much planning (Reaction 3). By March she said peer response made her plan her content and structure:

I change [my writing habits] a lot because before I have peer response, I always write my paper or my homework {n a lousy way}. Now since I have peer response, I will consider- think about my content and organization more than before. Before I write, I will think they will give me some comment about what what what, so I have to choose some ways to write. Otherwise I'll get thousands or hundreds comments (Focus group).

She was also trying to make her ideas more meaningful. She said, "{Unlike before, now I would try to develop my ideas more, to achieve more depth in the discussion. In the past, I didn't even think about whether my ideas have depth or not}" (Reaction 7). She also began to outline her thoughts
before she wrote, since she knew her writing would be shared with her group (Exit interview). Peer response also made her put in more effort. After Session 1, she said, "Discussing with our peer can make us work harder" (Log 2). It also made her think. She stated,

Peer response help me a lot to revise because I can get more information about the topic. Sometimes when I write this topic, I didn’t think a lot about this topic from many aspects. When you give me comments, it’s easier to me to think more about this topic. . . . Sometimes we are confused about how to write content or organization, but after the discussion, we will think more deeply. We’ll think about it and make our mind more clear.

She sensed that over time revision became much easier, and she also revised more and wrote longer papers (Focus group). Close to the end of the first semester, she said her compositions improved in general (Reaction 7).

However, even though Sho-Li was often receptive of her peers’ comments, she did not always follow them blindly. In fact, she began to show more independent thinking as the time went by. After Session 3, she said to the researcher,

Some of the comments I have to think about a bit. Sometimes they think I should do this and that. But if I do that, I would have violated my original intentions. So I have to evaluate their suggestions and decide whether I want to use them or not (Revision 3).

Again after completing Assignment 5, she felt that one of her peers’ suggestions had misled her to revise in a problematic way. Even though she still had considerable confidence in her group after this, she felt she learned a
lesson: in the future she should do her own thinking (Revision 5).

At the end of the course, she still believed that language was her greatest obstacle, as she did in the beginning. She still did not like to write. However, writing and revising had become easier and her initial apprehension about writing also subsided a little (Exit interview). She said in the future she might write a diary in English, although she would not try anything that required an extensive vocabulary (Log 7).

Sho-Li liked her group. She believed her group members were kind, earnest, and receptive to suggestions (Log 3). She was also thankful for the great deal of moral support she received from them. She reported, "Sometimes I feel frustrated [with my spoken English], but this feeling disappears soon because my group members often comfort me or encourage me when I try hard to say something in English" (Log 6). Her peers' comments also made her feel her group cared about her (Reaction 2). To her, the atmosphere in the group was good because all of them joined the discussion and never argued (Log 5). Since everybody was tactful and sincere, she felt free to speak and did not worry about negative reactions (Reaction 3). As the time went by, she got to know her group better and enjoyed their company more. Her confidence in them as responders also grew. To her, the group functioned as helpers rather than as judges of her
writing. At the end of the course, she cherished this group experience so much that she would be willing to try another year of peer response if the new composition teacher next year decides to use it (Exit interview).

When interviewed again one year after this study, Sho-Li said her present writing teacher uses both peer response and teacher-student conferences to facilitate revision. She still makes a small number of substantive revisions, mostly on content, even though not as many as she did in the researcher's course. The majority of her revisions are at the surface level, because of her present teacher's emphasis on language. She still enjoys peer response as a result of her positive experience in the researcher's class.

**Sho-Li's Perception of Herself as a Critiquer**

Sho-Li did not like to write peer critique sheets but still wrote them, since she believed they were necessary. She did not have much confidence in her ability to critique others' writing. She attributed part of the difficulty to her inability to express herself well in English. She said, "In order to express myself, I had to use a lot of words, a lot of words I don't know. So I give up" (Reaction 2). Another difficulty was her inability to detect problems as a result of her own poor writing. She said, "I give few comments just because I really can not tell where is bad unless they make a big mistake (Log 6)." For example, she was afraid to comment on her peers' film reviews. She said,
"Since my experience in writing is poor, I can not charge [change] this work [paper] well. Perhaps my opinion is wrong and I might give some bad advice to my group members" (Log 3). Sometimes the difficulty came from not having sufficient time to read the drafts because she received them too late. She wanted to get the drafts two or three days beforehand. She said that she could comprehend 50 to 70% from one reading of the text and that under such circumstances she could understand the content but could not detect structural problems (Reaction 2). Her lack of knowledge about the subject matter was occasionally an obstacle. For example, critiquing film reviews was difficult because she did not know what part of the movies impressed her peers and therefore could not suggest what to emphasize (Log 3). Sometimes the problem was her own careless reading (Log 9).

One month into the first semester, Sho-Li sensed some improvement in her performance. She said, "In the beginning, I did not know how to critique other group members' writing and critiqued them disorderly. But now, it is easier to me to point out the weakness of their drafts if I have enough time to read them" (Log 3). However, by November she still felt she did not have a good grasp of others' writing (Reaction 3). Close to the end of the first semester, she sensed some progress and felt motivated to learn to critique (Log 6). She felt she could comment on
content and structure, but not on grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, or spelling, because of her inadequate English (Log 4).

She said her peers' comments on her writing helped her critique others' writing. According to her, "{After they pointed out the weakness in my draft, I would use the same criteria to judge their writing}" (Reaction 3). In addition, listening to her peers critique others' papers helped her think about them in new ways. She said, "{They brought up something I overlooked. . . . The next time I critique, maybe I would be able to see the problem she mentioned}" (Reaction 7). After participating in peer response sessions for one and a half semesters, she also sensed a greater awareness of the focus of the writing (Reaction 7).

As to her performance in critiquing her own texts, about one month into the first semester, she reported having difficulty. She said, "So far, I still do not know how to critique my own writing. It is difficult to me because that since I wrote my draft myself, I would naturally think it is OK" (Log 3). She disliked writing self critique sheets. She did not even write them for Assignments 2 and 3 because she did not know how (Logs 3, 4). By May, even though she still did not think she did a good job critiquing her own writing, she felt she improved slightly (Log 9).
She believed there was a connection between her ability to critique peers' writing and her ability to critique her own. She indicated that after analyzing others' writing, it was easier to analyze her own. She said, "Because when you critique others, you get to know how other people wrote their drafts. Maybe that would give you some ideas [for critiquing your own writing]" (Log 6). She also thought that seeing how her peers critique her writing helped her critique her own. However, she did not think critiquing her own texts helped her critique others', because she could not critique her own writing very well and therefore such experience would not facilitate her critiques of others'.

Near the end of the first semester, she said it was easier to critique her peers' texts than her own, and that she was doing better with the former (Revision 5).

Performance in Critiquing Writing

Sho-Li made much progress in her performance in critiquing writing, as shown in the strategies she used in critiquing her peers' texts and the comments on her before- and after-session peer and self critique sheets.

Strategies Used in Responding to Texts

Table 4 shows the types and numbers of the strategies Sho-Li used when she responded to her peers' texts. Mirroring was her most frequent strategy, followed by Helping, Responding, and then Praising. As the course progressed, there was a tendency for her strategies to
Table 4
Sho-Li's Responding Strategies: Types and Instances of Use

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Praise</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief praise</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantiated praise</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mirroring</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restating</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responding</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem identification</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem analysis</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helping</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

become more varied and numerous. This was particularly obvious between Sessions 2 and 4. Her total number of instances of strategy use was higher than An-Lin's and Man-Hua's and lower than Cha-Yang's.

*Mirroring* was not used until Session 2. Most of the time it remained at the factual level. She used *Mirroring (effects)* only once, in Session 6. In this case, she showed
appreciation for the effect Cha-Yang achieved by discussing the seriousness of child abuse problems in her definition paper, as follows.

Your paragraph- you think about this kind of condition, and leads us to think about them more deeply, to think about the situation of your cases deeply [Mirroring (effects)].

Helping was the second most frequent strategy. This was the only strategy that she used in Session 2. Her initial conception of responding seemed to be to go straight into giving suggestions, just as the others in her group did. In this session, she suggested that Man-Hua discuss the suicide in the movie Dead Poet’s Society, as shown below. [s=Sho-Li]

s: Do you know what’s the meaning of the situation that one of his student suicide?

[Man-Hua responded.]

s: I think since that the director show us this situation, I think it’s important meaning [Helping (suggestion)].

After Session 2, Helping responses greatly increased in number and sophistication. In Session 4, she began to integrate Mirroring and Responding into her suggestions, and did so in one of four instances. In the second semester, she combined her suggestions with Responding in 12 of 16 instances and with Mirroring in 13. An example is her discussion of An-Lin’s failure to develop the definition of "Study" in her definition paper.

You have a definition of "study" in the last paragraph [Mirroring (restating)], but through the whole article
Her suggestions also became more elaborate over time. In the first semester, the four instances in which she made suggestions were all categorized as Helping (problem identification). In the second semester 9 of 17 instances were categorized as Helping (collaboration), indicating a dramatic change in her performance. At this stage, she was giving more thought to writing problems and was able to explore approaches to revision carefully. In two instances she even offered more than one solution to a problem. An example is her suggestion regarding An-Lin’s paper, which discussed whether women should quit their jobs for child rearing. She actually demonstrated how she herself would revise.

S: I don’t agree one of your opinion. "Children do not need to learn to deal with other people." Maybe you can change your way to say that. You can say children really need to learn to deal with other people, but {the basic thing is} you have to-

c: Early stage-

s: Yeah, you have to-

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m: You just only add some words, "They don't have to deal with other people by this way."

[An-Lin explained that she deleted a sentence by mistake, which caused the reader to feel she was saying that children do not need to learn to deal with other people.]

s: {Another way, you can say they do need to learn to deal with other people, but before learning this, the most basic thing, children must develop- the mother should help children develop good habits. Otherwise they would be influenced by their bad peers. This is essential} [Helping (collaboration)].

Responding was her third most frequent strategy. Her ability to talk about writing problems in the first semester was very weak and she did so only once. However, in the second semester the number of instances increased dramatically to 17. The quality of her Responding also improved significantly. In the first semester she talked about a problem only once, and she only mentioned the problem without discussing it in detail. In this instance she commented on An-Lin's paper about the conflicts between parents and children, as shown in the following.

I think it would be better if you develop the third paragraph about the attitude the different attitude toward money between parents and children, because I think sometimes they are not so different. [(Responding (problem identification)].

In the second semester she was able to analyze problems to a certain extent in 9 of 17 instances. The example in the section about Helping is an example.

Over the course, she also became slightly less suggestion-oriented. In Sessions 2 and 4 she followed her
Responding with Helping in 5 of 6 instances, but in Session 7 she did so in only 5 of 8. She seemed to shift her focus slightly more toward discussing problems. However, in Session 9, she went back to her old pattern in all four instances.

Praising was least used. She did not start to praise until Session 4. Most of the time her praising was brief and in only 5 of 15 instances did she integrate it with Mirroring to make her praise clearer. An example of this integration is as follows.

I think your comparison and contrast about you and your sister is very clearly. I can understand very well [Praising (brief praise)]. You mention four aspect to compare you and your sister [Mirroring (restating)]. I think it's pretty well [Praising (brief praise)].

Within her group, her praising was the least elaborate. In one instance in Session 6 she did attempt to substantiate her praise by discussing the effects of the writing. However, this was rare. She and Cha-Yang were the only two that ever used Praising (substantiated praise).

Sho-Li made dramatic progress in the second semester. She was the one in her group that made the most significant improvement.

Peer Critiques

Sho-Li made progress in her ability to assess writing, and this was reflected in the peer critique sheets she wrote before and after the sessions.
Before-session peer critiques.

Table 5 shows the numbers and types of comments Sho-Li made on her before-session peer critique sheets. (As in the previous case study, Assignment 2 was treated as a special case.)

Table 5
Comments on Sho-Li’s Before-Session Peer Critiques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
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<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity, etc.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>46 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sho-Li made 46 comments in five sessions, an average of 3.1 comments for each paper. There seemed to be a rough trend of increase in the quantity of comments as the course progressed. The element most frequently commented on was Content, then Structure, and then Clarity and Coherence. There were very few comments on Style or about the essay in general.
With the exception of one very general comment about the overall clarity of an essay in Session 4, there seemed to be an emphasis on Content in the first semester. In the second semester Sho-Li's attention shifted to cover other aspects as well, such as Structure and Style, and her comments on Clarity and Coherence also became more specific.

1. Comments on Content.

She made 24 comments on Content in five sessions. In the first two sessions, she made a total of eight comments on content. Four suggested developing a paragraph or an essay further, and three suggested adding an idea to the content with no reasons given. The ideas she suggested adding were not essential to the development of the major thoughts in the essays. For example, on Cha-Yang's comparison and contrast paper about the differences between girls from Hong Kong and girls from Taiwan, Sho-Li wrote: "Would you like to mention about the similar qualities between H. K. girls and Taiwan girls." She seemed to have a tendency to appropriate the authors' content by suggesting ideas she herself would have included, instead of helping the authors improve the presentation of their existing ideas. In the second semester she still had two such suggestions out of a total of 16, but five of her other comments showed she had learned to identify problems with the existing texts, mostly by pointing out what the essential elements of an essay should be. For example, on
An-Lin’s definition paper "Study," she made this comment: "You have a definition of study in the last paragraph but through the whole article, this is the only place you mention the definition about study. I think you had better talk about more definitions which come from common people and you yourself." She also made two suggestions to add ideas that were important to the discussion of the central theme. There were four other comments of praise and three that assessed the problems in certain segments of the texts. The way she critiqued content seemed to have improved greatly over time. Only 1 of the 24 comments were considered problematic to the researcher. An example is her failure to see that Cha-Yang presented her definition in the third person in the definition paper.

2. Comments on Structure

Sho-Li was not able to comment on Structure until Session 6. In Sessions 6, 7 and 9, she started to praise the overall organization of the essays and detect some specific problems in the paragraph or the essay overall. Of the total of 10 comments she produced, 5 were sweeping comments of praise about the organization overall, and 5 were suggestions on the order, length, and division of the paragraphs. Only 2 of the 10 comments were problematic. An example is her failure to see the logic in which Cha-Yang structured the paragraphs in her research paper, which was in fact well organized. However, Sho-Li was still somewhat
weak in detecting problems in structure and format. She failed to detect obvious flaws such as the absence of a conclusion in one essay and the introduction of new ideas in the conclusion of another.

3. Comments on Clarity and Coherence

She made ten comments on Clarity and Coherence. In Sessions 2 and 4 she made a total of three comments, all of which were very general statements about the clarity of a paragraph or an essay overall, such as "I like your film critique because it is very clear." By Session 6, she began to point out specific problems with logic and coherence in addition to clarity. All of the comments were acceptable and in fact the ones that identified problems were mostly valuable. For example, she pointed out the logical flaw in Man-Hua's definition of a hero: "A hero in my mind, he need not to achieve great accomplishment because not every accomplished man is hero." Sho-Li apparently improved greatly in the second semester.

4. Comments on Style

Style seemed to be Sho-Li's weakest area. She did not comment on this aspect until Session 6 and she made only one comment. This comment was praise about the use of a story to begin an essay, and it was acceptable. She failed to point out any problems.

Of the 46 comments for the five assignments, 16 were comments of praise, indicating that praising was one of her
major strategies. Eleven of these comments were very general statements about overall clarity (N=2), overall content (N=4), and overall organization (N=5). The rest of the comments were general praise about the content or clarity of certain paragraphs. The ones that were more specific were two in which she showed appreciation of the effective use of a story in the introduction. In general, Sho-Li often focused her praise on a very small number of aspects and made sweeping comments about the essay as a whole.

After-session peer critiques.

Sho-Li recorded 12 New comments and 1 Changed comment on her after-session peer critique sheets: 9 on Content; 3 on Structure; and 1 on Style. Her major attention was still on Content, as in the before-session peer critiques. Ten out of the total of 13 New and Changed comments (77%) coincided with the opinions her peers brought up during the group discussion.

Since only one of the 42 before-session comments (2%) in Assignments 4, 6, 7, and 9 was changed, the group discussion did not have much effect on modifying Sho-Li's original opinions. In addition, since the majority of her New and Changed comments coincided with her peers' opinions, peer response sessions served more as occasions for her to absorb other's opinions than as opportunities to form new ones. However, since 3 of the 13 New and Changed comments
(23%) did not coincide, the discussion did prompt her to form some new ideas.

Among the thirteen Changed and New comments, only one was problematic. That is, one of her before-session comments suggested that An-Lin combine each set of pro and con arguments into a paragraph in her argumentation paper so that there would not be too many short paragraphs. However, Sho-Li changed her mind and said it was not necessary after Cha-Yang disagreed with her. In fact, Sho-Li’s initial suggestion was valid, and Sho-Li was not confident enough to assert herself. The three comments that did not coincide were actually very valuable. Two of them specifically pointed out major problems in the texts. An example is her comment on Man-Hua’s paper about her and her sister: "Talk about some interesting aspects." (The most severe problem with Man-Hua’s essay was the mundane details.)

**Self Critiques**

Sho-Li made less progress with her self critiques than she did with her peer critiques, as this section will show.

**Before-session self critiques.**

Session 2 was excluded in the following discussion because Sho-Li did not write the before- or after-session self critiques for it. Table 6 shows the numbers and types of comments she made in the other sessions. She made only ten comments for four assignments, an average of 2.5 comments for a paper, smaller than what she made for her
peers (average of 3.1 per paper). The small number may be caused by the difficulty of evaluating her own papers and also her dislike for it. Sho-Li revealed that she did not know how to evaluate her writing and did not like to do it either (Log 4). Comments on Content were dominant (60%), just as in her peer critiques. With the exception of one comment in Session 4, she did not look into other aspects until Session 9.

Four of the ten comments were not clear, mostly because they only pointed out the nature of the problems but not their locations. For example, when she talked about her argumentation paper, she said, "Some of my pro are weak." On the other hand, four other comments pointed out her major
problems and were actually very good. For example, there was an anecdote in her definition paper which was very trite. Sho-Li noticed it too, saying, "My story in the beginning is not strong enough. Maybe I should make it up again [rewrite it]." Only one of the ten comments seemed problematic. When she discussed the paper about her study habits, she said, "Not only to compare the differences but also to compare the similarities." The researcher believed that broadening the topic would make her two-page essay too superficial.

Sho-Li's performance seemed to have improved from the first to the second semester. As far as comments on Content were concerned, in Session 4 both of the comments suggested adding ideas, which may actually make the topic too broad. In Sessions 6, 7, and 9, she no longer made such suggestions and looked more into problems with the focus or development of her existing ideas. As to the scope of the problems she looked into, in Session 4 none of the total of three comments concerned the whole text but in Sessions 6, 7, and 9, four of the total of seven comments did. She seemed to have learned to assess texts more holistically.

Her self and peer critiques had some things in common. Both focused on content, and both showed a shift over time from suggesting the addition of new ideas toward identifying problems with the focus and development of existing ideas. There were some differences between her peer and self
critiques, too. The most obvious was that the comments in her peer critiques were clearer. She may have been less careful with her self critiques since she did not have to show them to anyone, as she herself revealed (Revision 5).

**After-session self critiques.**

After the peer response sessions, Sho-Li recorded seven comments on the critique sheets for four sessions, six on Content and one on Structure. The predominant type of comment was on Content, just as in her other critiques. She recorded 7 New comments and no Changed comment.

Since none of the 10 comments she made before the sessions were changed, the group discussion did not seem to have much effect on her existing opinions. As to the seven New comments, all of them coincided with her peers' opinions, indicating that it was difficult for Sho-Li to form new opinions of her own even with the help of the discussion. Peer response sessions served as occasions for her to learn what her peers thought rather than as opportunities for her to form new ideas.

The effects of peer response was also shown by a comparison of the percentage of the comments from the self critiques that coincided with her peers' opinions with its counterpart from the peer critiques. In the former all of the comments coincided, while in the latter only 10 out of 13 comments (77%) did. It was clear that peer response was
less effective in helping Sho-Li form new opinions about her own drafts than about her peers'.

Reactions to Peers' Comments and Attitude

Toward Ownership of Texts

Sho-Li received 41 suggestions for revision: 21 (51%) on Content, 12 (29%) on Structure, 6 (15%) on Clarity and Coherence, and 2 (5%) on Style. She agreed with 32 (78%) of them, indicating that she was very receptive of her peers' opinions. She disagreed with 7 (17%) and felt unsure about 2 (5%). Such instances did not occur until Sessions 7 and 9, suggesting that after the training of one and a half semesters Sho-Li either finally felt more comfortable about showing doubts or had developed enough critiquing competence to allow her to think on her own.

She incorporated 28 (68%) of the suggestions. Of the 13 that were not incorporated, she disagreed with or felt unsure about 6, did not know how to carry out 3, considered 3 unnecessary after other revisions were made, and forgot about 1. Since only 6 of these 13 were suggestions that she did not intend to incorporate, she can be considered a very compliant reviser.

The nature of Sho-Li's revision on content showed that she did not have a strong sense of ownership of her writing, at least not in Assignments 2, 4, and 6. For these assignments, her peers made eight suggestions about ideas she could add to the content, all of which were like extra
additions rather than elements necessary for the development of existing ideas. In fact, these suggestions could be seen as a form of appropriation of the content. However, Sho-Li agreed to incorporate all of them.

When her revisions are checked against the comments on her before-session self critiques, it is apparent that she ignored her own assessment of the writing and acted on her peers'. On the self critiques she wrote 10 comments. Five of them were confirmed by her peers during the group discussion, and they were all incorporated at revision. Two other comments showed that Sho-Li suspected problems in her writing. During the discussion the group brought up these two problems, and one member agreed with Sho-Li's suspicion but another disagreed. At revision neither of the comments got incorporated. For example, Sho-Li suspected that the anecdotes in her definition paper were trite, which the researcher strongly agreed. Cha-Yang thought so too but Man-Hua praised them. Perhaps due to laziness or distrust of herself, she decided not to rewrite the anecdotes. One comment discussed an issue that was not brought up during the discussion, and it was not incorporated. Two remaining comments were too vague for the researcher to know whether Sho-Li had incorporated them or not. Sho-Li seemed to take her own assessment of the writing too lightly. This was true in both semesters.
Her sense of authority over her texts was also indicated in the way she dealt with the conflicts between her ideas about writing and those of her peers. In the first semester there were two instances (in Session 4) in which she felt such conflicts. In both instances she initially hesitated but finally decided to trust her peers and revise according to their suggestions. Fortunately, both suggestions were valid. In the second semester, Sho-Li started to feel more confident and rejected some of her peers’ suggestions. In three instances in Session 7 her opinions conflicted with her peers’, and in all three she rejected her peers’ with good reason. An example is her reaction to Cha-Yang’s suggestion that she should present examples of how parents should talk to their children about sex. Sho-Li first felt confused because she thought she had already presented approaches for parents to consider. After some deliberation she decided to stick to her initial opinion. The researcher agreed with Sho-Li’s decision because the paper was a general discussion about ways for the parents, teachers, and the whole of society to talk with children about sex. Specific examples of ways to talk would be beyond the scope of the paper. Sho-Li’s reasoning seemed to show that she was beginning to do her own thinking. In Session 9, in one instance she still relinquished her own idea unnecessarily. That is, Cha-Yang suggested that she use phrases such as "should" or "should not" to strengthen
her persuasiveness when arguing over an issue. Sho-Li initially believed that this was unnecessary because she just wanted to present her views and let the readers decide whether they agreed with her or not. However, she compromised and accepted Cha-Yang’s idea at revision. Generally speaking, Sho-Li was shy about assuming authority over her own text in the first semester, and she became more assertive in the second.

Sho-Li’s own perceptions about this issue were inconsistent. Sometimes she felt she was "the kind of person that gets influenced by others’ opinions easily," but at other times she believed she would not incorporate a suggestion that she disagreed with (Revision 9). She might have been a little more compliant than she realized.

As to Sho-Li’s ability to judge her peers’ suggestions, she seemed to exercise moderately good judgement. Only 4 of her 41 judgements were unacceptable to the researcher: she disagreed with two valid comments and agreed with two problematic ones. An example of a problematic judgement is her refusal to include citations when she borrowed ideas from other authors by paraphrasing their texts in her research paper. The other three mistakes concerned coherence, logic, and language style.

Examples of Sho-Li’s good judgement can be found in her five rejections to incorporate suggestions. For example, in Session 7 An-Lin suggested that she summarize ways of
implementing sex education in the conclusion of the research paper. Sho-Li told the researcher,

> If I summarize, it would take up a lot of space, because I mention many points. Here I am trying to say these three institutions [family, school, society] should work together. What I said in the body is clear enough. If I summarize, it would be too long, less powerful. What I did for my ending makes it more powerful (Revision 7).\textsuperscript{7}

The researcher agreed with Sho-Li. In fact Sho-Li's conclusion, which contained implications drawn from the main ideas of the essay, was more interesting than a summary.

**Revision Performance**

The changes in the lengths between the first and second drafts for the five assignments in terms of the number of words written and the percentages of increases are as follows: 149-->365 (145%); 459-->664 (45%); 450-->617 (37%); 1163-->1163 (0%); 669-->857 (28%). With the exception of Assignment 7, all the drafts increased greatly in length both from the first to the second drafts and from the first to the last assignment.

**Peer-Initiated Revisions**

Sho-Li's Assignment 2 was a film review on *The Medicine Man*. The first draft was sketchy and incomplete. She incorporated four of the five suggestions she received. She added a topic sentence to Paragraph 2 to state the importance of nature to humans. She added Paragraph 3 to discuss the visual effects of the movie and the connection between the title and the theme of the movie. She also

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organize her paragraphs by discussing first the plot, then the theme, and then the relationship between nature and humans, as suggested.

All of her revisions improved the text to a great extent, but they did not completely solve the problems. In Paragraph 2, the added topic sentence made the main idea of the paragraph clearer, but this paragraph could have been developed more. The added Paragraph 3 did enrich the content, but it mixed two underdeveloped main ideas (the meaning of the movie title and the visual effects of the movie), with no transition between them. It is shown below.

The visual effects of this movie is very good. Nature is the props of this movie. We can see the beautiful scene from the jungle and recognize that the nature can comfort us. I think this warn us do not forget to protect nature when we are busy for making our life better because the true is nature saves us. The title is "Medicine Man", but the fact is that no matter how good the medicine man is, he should get the elements of medicine from nature.

After the revisions, some new problems also arose. The most serious one was the overall organization. Since in her self-initiated revision she added Paragraph 4 to discuss the catastrophes brought about by modernization, which was thematically related to Paragraph 2 (about the price humans pay for development), she should have combined these two paragraphs or made one follow the other. However, she tagged Paragraph 4 on to the end of the text after she had dutifully put the paragraphs together as suggested by her peers, totally unaware of the restructuring her own addition
made necessary. The second draft also contained a serious problem left over from the first draft: the lack of an introduction and a conclusion. Since these problems were not pointed out, Sho-Li was unaware of them.

The 4th assignment was a comparison and contrast paper about her past and present study habits. She incorporated four out of the six suggestions she received. She added three clauses to Paragraph 1 to explain why her study habits changed, and added Paragraph 5 to discuss how her study habits affected her feelings about school before and after the changes. In response to a suggestion to strengthen the first and last paragraphs, she added two sentences to Paragraph 1 to introduce the topic and provide the context for the discussion in the body. To a comment that the negative tone of her conclusion contradicted the overall positive one of the body, she added a clause and two sentences in an attempt to correct the problem.

All but the last revision mentioned above improved the second draft. The new introduction was more consistent with the conclusion and provided the background for the changes. The addition of Paragraph 5 provides another vantage point from which the reader can see the changes. There were no serious problems with clarity or coherence in the second draft. The only revision that failed was her effort to change the negative tone in the conclusion. Her whole paper mainly talked about how her study habits had improved since
she entered the university, but her conclusion gave the impression that her study habits were still unsatisfactory. Even though she tried to add text to make the tone more positive, she failed. The revised conclusion is presented below with the added text underlined.

Since I have reform, my note-taking and studying are not as bad as then; however, I still do not study very well. I just work, not work hard, and sometimes I fail to hand my sessions on time. Some of my classmates do their works seriously. They spend lots of time on doing their jobs. I really admire them, and I think I should encourage myself to do my job as well as their’s. Time and environment change a person. I hope I will getting positive and positive in my learning.

In Assignment 6, a definition paper titled "Riches," she incorporated five out of the six suggestions she received. In Paragraph 2, she added a sentence to introduce a common definition of "riches" ("owning much money") and also expanded on three other common ones mentioned in the first draft (i.e., "good health," "love," "knowledge," and "nice figure"). She also defined the word "rich" before using it, and deleted a few synonyms of "riches" to avoid confusion. In the paragraph about her own definition, she add four sentences to state the four aspects she wanted to work on to obtain the "riches" of her definition. At the end she added a concluding paragraph.

All but one of the revisions were positive. The content of the second draft was more developed, and the structure was also more complete since a conclusion was added (even though it had problems). However, the revision
in which she talked about the four aspects she wanted to work on (i.e., sport, knowledge, beauty, morality) to get the "riches" of her definition (i.e., a healthy body and mind) was not very satisfactory. She only pointed out the four aspects and failed to discuss clearly what they meant or how to achieve them, as she had agreed when Cha-Yang suggested it. In addition, one very basic problem still existed after the revision: a marked lack of originality in content. The problem remained since nobody pointed it out.

Assignment 7 was a research paper titled "How to talk about Sex with Kids," in which she discussed the sex education carried out in the family, school, and society. She received five suggestions but incorporated only two. She separated her long introduction into two paragraphs as suggested, which improved the structure. The other suggestion offered two alternatives. One was to narrow down the content and develop it more fully by providing examples of how parents should talk to children about sex so that the content would match the title (with strong emphasis on "how to"). The other was to broaden the title to something such as "Sex Education Nowadays" in the event no more examples of ways to carry out sex education would be given. At revision, Sho-Li changed the title into "Talk about Sex with Kids," in an attempt to de-emphasize the "how to" aspect and avoid having to give more examples. However, the change in the title did not make much difference and in the
researcher’s opinion the real problem actually lay in Paragraph 5, which discussed the sex education offered by society in general. In this paragraph Sho-Li discussed the poor sex education society offers, but failed to give suggestions on the right ways for the society to educate kids about sex, as she did in other paragraphs. The researcher believed it was this paragraph that caused her peers to feel that a more fitting title should actually be "Sex Education Nowadays." However, Sho-Li was not aware of the problem in Paragraph 5 and revised ineffectively.

This was the first time that she made so few revisions, probably because this paper was the best that she did. In general, the second draft was well organized and clear. However, it retained certain problems from the first draft that were not identified by her peers. In Paragraph 4, which was about sex education provided by society, Sho-Li had only one sentence about what society could do to teach children. This caused an obvious imbalance since in Paragraphs 2 and 3 she offered lengthy suggestions on how to carry out sex education in the family and school. Structurally, Paragraph 4 was also much too short when compared with the other two.

In Assignment 9, Sho-Li wrote an argumentation paper titled "People should cohabit before they get married." She received 19 suggestions and incorporated 13. On the whole the revisions were a great success, with only one being
unacceptable. In response to her peers' comment that some of the pros did not have their corresponding cons and that one particular pro was not even logically relevant to its con, Sho-Li rewrote most of her arguments by preceding each pro with a logically pertinent con. She also deleted arguments that she could not establish appropriate counter-arguments for and others she found to be flawed. In response to a comment that she sometimes mixed more than two main ideas in a pro or con argument, she rewrote them by focusing each on only one idea. She succeeded in five of the six cases. The above changes were the largest and most successful revisions she made for this paper. In addition, she added two sentences to introduce various contending views to provide background information about the cohabitation issue. She also strengthened three of her arguments. For example, to counter opposition of conservatives to premarital sex, she added a paragraph about the benefit of testing sexual compatibility in a trial marriage, as suggested. In addition, she replaced the original conclusion with a new one. The original one actually was not a conclusion because it brought up many new arguments, and the second version served better. Both conclusions are presented below.

(1st) At the end I have to warn you that if you get a wrong marriage, then you only have two choices: one is to divorce and another is to suffer in your rest life. If you prefer to divorce, you have to spend a lot of time and thought to recover and even you finally do it well, you still waste many years already. But if you
cohabit before you get married, even you choose the wrong person, you can easily to find your new lover because you are not a person that have divorced before, and you can choose another person who is more suitable to you. There is another problem that if you have babies in your marriage, that would be your responsibility forever. The babies are innocent but they have to share your fault just because you make a wrong decision.

(2nd) Marriage is holly, and trial marriage is holly, too. People should not have such wrong notion that trial marriage is like cohabitation. The basic conditions of trial marriage are love, patience, and sincere. The meaning of it is to have the best marriage in your life.

She made one revision that was considered neutral and one problematic. In the former case, in response to a suggestion that she should use more persuasive language such as "people should" or "people should not," she added phrases such as "in my opinion" and "people should." The researcher felt that the use of strong language is a matter of style and therefore an unnecessary critique. (In fact Sho-Li's use of "in my opinion" had the opposite effect!) In the problematic revision, she put the thesis statement in the wrong place in her argumentation paper. In addition, one structural problem arose after the revisions. Paragraphs 3 and 5 should follow each other since they talked about related ideas.

In general, Sho-Li's major revision efforts in the five assignments seemed to be focused on Content. She made 15 revisions in this area. The majority of them were considered acceptable, even though some of them may be somewhat underdeveloped. The next largest group of
revisions were on Structure. She made seven revisions, most of which were acceptable. There were four revisions on Clarity and Coherence, all of which were effective. She made only two revisions on Style and neither was very successful. This seemed to be her weakest area.

Sho-Li’s revisions over the course showed that she gradually became more able to handle whole-text level revisions. In the first semester, she mostly made paragraph level changes, with the exception of one whole-text level revision which failed. In the second semester, she made more revisions that concerned the whole text and was also more effective with them.

**Self-Initiated Revisions**

Sho-Li also made some higher- and lower-level revisions on her own in two assignments. In the film review, she expanded the summary of the plot and made the story clearer. She also added a paragraph about the irony of civilization, which gave more depth to the review. In the definition paper on "Riches," at the end of the anecdotes in the introduction, she added one sentence to introduce the topic. She also slightly expanded the definition of "riches" in the anecdotes. Additionally, she expanded the paragraph about her own definition to some extent and rephrased some sentences in each paragraph. All her revisions were positive. Since in her freshman year she made mostly
surface-level revisions, her self-initiated revisions were promising.

**Summary**

Sho-Li surely benefitted very much from peer response. She said peer response pushed her to work harder and made her more conscious of content and structure. It also greatly facilitated her revision. The strong apprehension she initially had about writing subsided slightly at the end. She enjoyed the help and moral support she received from her group.

Of all the group members, she showed the most dramatic improvement. The critiquing strategy she used most was restating what the author did, followed by making suggestions, discussing problems, and then praising. Her strategies became more varied and numerous over time. In the beginning she often made suggestions directly. Later she tended to make her suggestions more sophisticated by combining them with restatements of what the authors did and discussions of writing problems. She became less suggestion-oriented, but her suggestions and problem discussions became more elaborate.

Sho-Li’s peer critique sheets showed that she focused most of her attention on content initially and did not address organization, structure, format, style, or tone until the second semester. All but 3 of the total of 46 comments were valid. Her comments improved greatly in
quantity and quality over time. Her emphasis was initially on content, but it broadened to involve other aspects as well. In the first semester she tended to focus on the paragraph, but in the second she was also able to evaluate text holistically by pointing out problems with the focus of an essay. However, throughout the course she had a tendency to appropriate others' content by suggesting the inclusion of ideas that were not essential to the development of their texts.

In her before-session self critiques, she made fewer comments and was less effective in identifying problems. Most of the comments were on content, and generally she did not look beyond content until the last session. The comments she made were more vague than those on her peer critiques. However, she was still able to identify a few problems accurately. She improved greatly from the first to the second semester, and became better able to evaluate text holistically. She believed that listening to her peers' critique texts greatly helped her critique her own texts. However, she did not feel her self critiquing helped improve her ability to critique her peers' texts at all, since she did not think she knew how to assess her own writing well.

Peer response allowed Sho-Li to learn much about her peers' writing, since the majority of her after-session comments for her peers came directly from the group discussion. However, her learning was passive because very
few of the opinions she formed before the sessions were modified, and only a small percentage of her comments did not coincide with her peers' opinions. On the other hand, peer response gave her an opportunity to learn what her peers thought about her writing, but it did not induce her to form any new opinions. Apparently group discussion was less effective in helping her form new perspectives about her own writing than about her peers'.

She was quite receptive to her peers' suggestions for revision and incorporated 68% of them. Comments on her self critiques that were confirmed by her peers during the group sessions tended to get incorporated, while unconfirmed comments were often ignored. She sometimes also let her peers shape her content. However, she became more assertive about ownership of her writing in the last two assignments and rejected some suggestions with good reason.

Most of Sho-Li's decisions to incorporate or reject her peers' suggestions were valid and most of her revisions brought about considerable improvement. Initially she tended to insert a paragraph into the text with no consideration for overall structure, but over time she became more aware of the complications brought about by revisions. In the first semester she made mostly paragraph-level revisions, but in the second she made more revisions at the whole-text level and they were also more effective.
Since in the past she mainly made surface-level changes, this growth in her revision patterns was significant.

Sho-Li's experience with peer response was very positive. She said she would like to have a class like this again next year.
Chapter 6

A Case Study of Cha-Yang: An Independent Reviser

Cha-Yang, who came from Hong Kong, was a 21-year-old English major in her junior year. A year ago she transferred to the English Department from the Chinese Department of a college in Hong Kong. She thought Taiwan was a better place to live because she found people there to be more caring and warm. She was a very hardworking student who set high standards for herself, and she attended classes regularly, participated in learning activities dutifully, and often turned in her assignments on time. She planned to go to the U.S. to pursue a graduate degree, and therefore she was strongly motivated to write well in English. She was very polite, easygoing, and friendly, and was well liked by her classmates and the researcher.

Cha-Yang as a Writer

Cha-Yang was the strongest writer in her group. She usually planned her first drafts carefully (Revision 5). Since students in Hong Kong usually have more exposure to English than those who study in Taiwan, she had a much larger vocabulary than any of the local students in the researcher’s class. Her major weakness was grammar, even though it was still better than her classmates’. Her ideas for writing also seemed to be more original than those of the majority of her classmates.
Before Cha-Yang came to this class, she already had sound revision practice. She always revised her compositions, and her strategy was to approach the global level elements first and then the local level ones. As she said:

I will do the revision to see if the content is good enough. Then I will think about the organization of the whole passage. Is it easy for the readers to understand? ... Finally I will check the grammatical and spelling mistakes. Revision is very important to me (Log 1).

She liked to write because it gave her a chance to express herself (Log 1). Her writing was greatly appreciated by a former teacher, which gave her much confidence in her ability (Log 2).

**Cha-Yang’s Experience with Peer Response**

Cha-Yang had no prior experience with peer response. At the beginning of the course, she believed that peer response had its advantages and disadvantages:

I think the advantage of peer response is that I can know my classmates from their writings, whatever their personalities, thinking, or even the English standard. If peer response works well, the class will have a lot of fun. We can learn from each other. The weakness of peer response is that our thoughts will be influenced by the others. The opinions of the classmates are not always good. In this way, we will lose our own style (Log 1).

Even though she had reservations about peer response in the very beginning, Cha-Yang found Session 1 to be effective (Log 2). After Session 2, even though she did not find the comments she received to be sufficient, she still said she
liked having her peers respond to her drafts. She said, "[The teacher used to be the sole reader. I don't know if other readers would like what I wrote. Now I know what they like]" (Reaction 2). She felt the comments she received for Assignments 4 and 6 were very helpful. For example, in Assignment 6, she was very concerned about her last paragraph, and the group's long discussion about it made her clearer about her problem. However, she thought the comments she received for Assignments 7 and 9 were a little disappointing. For example, for Assignment 9 she wanted suggestions on ideas she could add to strengthen her argument but she did not receive any. At the end of the year, she expressed her reservations about the validity of her peers' comments: "It is dangerous when all the peers or some of the peers have the wrong suggestions or concepts. The whole group will make the same kind of mistake. In this case, peer response won't help but to worsen our writings" (Log 9). However, she felt that in general peer response was still beneficial and she gained new ideas about others' writing and her own (Exit interview).

Cha-Yang believed that her peers could offer suggestions on content, because they shared similar life experiences, but not on grammar, style, or tone (Revision 2). Since Cha-Yang was the best writer in her group, she received praise quite often. However, she wished that she
could have gotten more suggestions for revision, preferably on content (Reaction 4).

Before revising, Cha-Yang always studied the suggestions she received cautiously. She said, "I'll see how their suggestions relate to my assignment. Any suggestions that fit, I would accept" (Reaction 2). She also said to her group, "Somehow the comments you give will influence my writing style. But the decision is on my own, so I will insist if I think it affect" (Focus group). She seemed to accept only suggestions that confirmed her own ideas about the writing, and since she never felt compelled to use the suggestions, she did not find them to be an intrusion on her sense of authorship (Revision 5). She said there were three reasons why she did not make many large scale revisions. One was that she did careful prewriting planning, another was her laziness, and the third was that her peers did not offer many valid comments (Reaction 7).

When asked about what she thought the value of peer response was, she said she enjoyed the challenge of giving and receiving comments. She felt that the discussion prompted her to think about her writing even though the comments might not be directly helpful for revision. She became more aware of her writing process, which was a new experience for her. She revealed,

I more understand my writing [now]. Sometimes I did not quite understand my writing. I mean before. [Now] because they would challenge you on your paper. And we
[you] have to very understand what you are writing (Reaction 6).

She sensed that she became more careful about organization and content since her group became her audience. Her perception of her difficulty in writing also changed. At the beginning of the course, she thought her problems were language errors, i.e., the micro level (Log 2). One month into the second semester she began to sense that she had difficulty in both word usage and tone, i.e., both the micro and macro level. At the end of the course she reported no changes in her attitudes about writing. She continued to enjoy writing throughout the year (Exit interview).

For her, the most troublesome part of peer response was that some students did not turn in their drafts well ahead of time. Under such circumstances, she was not able to give good feedback (Log 6). She also felt that her peers did not give her as many suggestions as she expected because they did not allow sufficient time to read her papers (Exit interview). In addition, the knowledge that her peers would be reading her essays kept her from writing about personal feelings. She said to her group,

We avoid those personal thing in the paper because I know I would give it to you to read. We are just writing very general things. Especially writing some stories or even a kind of literary work. We have to work very deep (Focus group).

Occasionally Cha-Yang sensed that the atmosphere in the group was not very lively. Sometimes this was because some members failed to read the drafts carefully beforehand and
were unable to participate fully (Reaction 3). By the second semester, she felt that the group sessions had become more interesting because group interaction had increased. Toward the end of this course, she said she enjoyed the group discussions very much. However, when asked how she would react if her composition teacher wants to use peer response next year, she laughed and said she would like to have a few sessions, but perhaps not more than four in a year (Exit interview). She may have felt this way because she did not receive as much help from the group as she wanted.

Cha-Yang was the group leader, and she took her duty seriously. She said, "I feel I [am] like a host to make the session to go on smoothly. I have to control atmosphere and time" (Log 6). To liven up the discussions, she pushed herself to speak more. She said, "Actually I am a shy girl. I am not a person full of confidence, at least not confidence with my speaking, my English. I try very hard to overcome these problems. I prepare well before class" (Log 6). She also did not like anyone to show superiority when offering or receiving criticism. To her, group harmony was very important and therefore everyone should be sensitive to feelings. She felt a responder must interact tactfully: "(Because you have to point out the flaws, it is as if you were acting like you are better than the other person)" (Reaction 4). She therefore felt somewhat uncomfortable
with Man-Hua. During Session 2 she thought Man-Hua sounded as if she was giving a speech when she talked, and that she ignored the others. In Session 4, she worried about Man-Hua's blunt criticism of An-Lin's vocabulary. In Session 7 when the group was discussing Man-Hua's research paper, she again felt slightly irritated by her constant intimations that the group members were not reading her paper right and that they did not understand her subject matter (Log 3, Reaction 4, 7).

However, she was comfortable with Sho-Li and An-Lin and felt more so as the course progressed. She enjoyed their friendship throughout the year (Exit interview). In the group she sensed that her comments were valued and her writing was appreciated. She felt she could relax and speak freely in the group because she was talking to her peers, instead of the teacher (Reaction 4).

Six months after this study, Cha-Yang wrote to the researcher and said that her current teacher also uses peer response and is quite demanding about revision. She said, "Every time I have to revise a lot, because she [the teacher] gives a lot of suggestions and corrections. Not only grammatical mistakes, misused words, she also comments on organization and content." She also sent some drafts she wrote for her Junior Composition course. Her revisions showed that she is continuing to make some substantive revisions as she did before.
Cha-Yang's Perception of Herself as a critiquer

Cha-Yang worked very hard critiquing her peers' drafts and enjoyed doing them. She wrote her peer critiques carefully beforehand so that she could make a contribution. She was the only student that occasionally typed them. She said,

"It takes up quite a lot of time for me to read and give comments. I spend about half an hour for each draft. But I still take it seriously. I have the responsibility to do my best. I really want them to take my comments seriously. If my advice are valid, I will be very happy (Log 6)."

The reason why I read them [peers' drafts] carefully and more than one time is because I don't want to give invalid suggestions. I think it is a kind of not respect to others if I don't prepare well or overlook others' writings (Log 9).

She also believed that her comments were valid and helpful (Reaction 4).

She said she usually commented on content, organization, and structure (Log 3). At Session 3 she started to make some comments on language, but she had less confidence in doing so (Reaction 2). By the end of the course, she sensed that she had shifted from commenting mostly on content, organization, and structure to commenting on grammar and logic as well (Log 9). However, she thought her performance varied with the assignments, with no clear signs of steady progress (Exit interview).

To critique her peers' texts, she felt she needed to read the drafts at least twice (Reaction 3). She said listening to her group members discuss writing sometimes
gave her new perspectives (Log 8). She was very conscious
about the need to be tactful in the group and she worried
that she might sound rude when she talked in a rushed manner
(Reaction 4). (In fact the researcher felt that Cha-Yang
had always been tactful.)

Cha-Yang found it harder to evaluate her own writing.
She felt it was useless to write self critiques because she
did not know how to write them. For this reason, she failed
to write her self critique for Assignment 3. Neither did
she enjoy critiquing her own writing. She said, "I don't
like critiquing my own text because on one hand, I don't
want to praise myself, on the other hand, I don't want to
devalue myself either. So I think self critiquing is
useless" (Log 4). Her attitudes toward it had not changed
during the year and she also failed to see any improvement
in her performance (Log 9).

At the end of the course she indicated that she did not
think critiquing her peers' texts helped her critique her
own or vice versa, because to her the tasks involved were
very different. She said, "It's easier to give comments to
the others than to comment on my own paper. Although I gave
all the suggestions to my peers, I still didn't know how to
write my self-critique sheets, especially before peers
response session" (Log 9).
Performance in Critiquing Writing

Cha-Yang's critiquing strategies and comments on the critique sheets both showed improvement, particularly the former.

Strategies Used in Responding to Texts

Table 7 shows the types and numbers of strategies Cha-Yang used when responding to peers' texts.

Table 7
Cha-Yang's Responding Strategies: Types and Instances of Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
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<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Praise</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief praise</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mirroring</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restating</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem identification</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helping</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Helping is the strategy Cha-Yang used most frequently, Mirroring is second, Responding is third, and Praising is least often used. Generally speaking, as the course progressed, there was an increase in the number of times strategies were used. She used these strategies more often than anyone else in the group and was also the only one that used all four types right from the beginning.

Cha-Yang’s Helping strategy became more sophisticated over time. In the beginning, like the other students, she was suggestion-oriented, even though to a lesser degree. In Session 2, she made four suggestions and only one was combined with Responding (problem analysis). What made her more sophisticated than the others was that she was able to combine at least one suggestion with problem analysis, and that she was also able to help the authors explore what they wanted to write and how they wanted to write it by asking questions before she made any suggestion. For example, she asked An-Lin about her feelings toward the movie she reviewed and used the answer as the basis for a suggestion, as shown below.

c: Why you like this movie? [explorative questioning]

a: I think I like the scene, also the-  When I first see this movie, I was attracted by scenery. After I saw the movie, I also saw the videotape for two times. . . . I think it’s attractive because I really think of the situation of our own.

c: Then I think in your critique you should first-first describe the scene, the scenery, and the theme, then the plot, and then how it relate to our situation in Taiwan [Helping (brief suggestion)].
In contrast, all the other students tended to go straight into making suggestions, by telling the authors how they themselves would have written the essays. As the course progressed, Cha-Yang’s tendency to integrate Mirroring and Responding into her Helping greatly increased. By Sessions 7 and 9, 16 of her 22 suggestions were combined with Responding, and 9 with Mirroring. Her Helping strategy appeared to become more sophisticated over time. An example is her suggestion to Man-Hua that she should mention why sculpture was chosen as the topic of her research paper.

C: I notice if you say that you are just analyze Michelangelo by Moses, which aspect you analyze—because Michelangelo has many talents on sculpture, even architecture. . . . What your paper here is to analyze mainly on his sculpture’s technique [Mirroring (restating)]. Yes, so maybe the greatness-

M: I should tell you— I was thinking you might know because sculpture is his favorite work. He doesn’t like-

C: Also his painting is very famous.

[Man-Hua explained the reason for selecting sculpture.]

C: You pick up sculpture to discuss, but your topic—I am saying the topic is the greatness. It’s a little too broad. If you say the greatness, it include paintings or architecture. . . , because you mention that he was also an outstanding sculptor, architect, and poet. So the greatness, it includes all these talents [Responding (problem analysis)]. Maybe you can state on the topic [title] you are discussing the sculpture technique [Helping (suggestion)].

However, throughout the course she used Helping (collaboration) less often than she used Helping (suggestion). She was able to give one detailed suggestion
as early as Session 2, but the number of such instances did not generally increase. An example of Helping (collaboration) is her specific suggestion on Man-Hua's film review, as shown below.

    c: I think it's too much for you to write three things in your paper. Why don't you just choose one or two you think is important to write. And then you write it in detail.

[Man-Hua responded.]

    c: But I don't think there is need for you to write the whole story, the whole plot. You just pick out one or two important incident on the story that really impress you, that really meaningful to you.

[Man-Hua responded.]

    c: I have a suggestion. Why don't you write the plot briefly to tell us what is going on in the movie, and then you pick out one or two incidents that is important, . . . and then you explain it and you critique it [Helping (collaboration)].

she was the only one in the group that was able to use Helping (collaboration) as early as Session 2. However, there were no clear signs that her suggestions were becoming more elaborate over time.

Her second most frequent strategy was Mirroring. The Mirroring stayed mostly on the factual level and only once did she talk about the effects of the writing. An example of Mirroring (restating) will be provided in the discussion about Praising.

The third most frequent strategy was Responding. In general, over the course both Responding (problem identification) and Responding (problem analysis) increased
considerably, especially in Sessions 7 and 9. An example of the former strategy is the mention of inconsistency in the tone in Sho-Li’s paper about her study habits in Session 4.

The whole article seems talking about positive changes in your studying. But in your conclusion the feeling is negative. It doesn’t quite match for each other [Responding (problem identification)].

An example of the latter strategy is her discussion of a quote Man-Hua used to describe Michelangelo’s sculpture Moses. Cha-Yang believed it was too general.

   c: You say if you want to use one sentence to describe this statue..., it was "There was no other works to be seen, whether ancient or modern, which could rival it." When I read this quoting, I expect that some very special words to describe the statue Moses. But the quoting here is too general. Yes, I have this feeling when you- I use one sentence to describe Sho-Li, "Oh, she is gorgeous, she is beautiful." But you didn’t really know what is the special quality Sho-Li has. So I expected some specific description. Why you choose this quoting?

   [Man-Hua explained the reason behind her choice.]

   c: You know every famous or important art work the saying [description] would be the same as this quoting, you know [Responding (problem analysis)].

When compared with Sho-Li and An-Lin, Cha-Yang demonstrated greater elaboration in her analyses of problems. She also incorporated explorative questioning in 2 of the 14 instances to help her gain perspectives about the problems.

   As the course progressed, Cha-Yang tended to feel slightly more comfortable about letting the authors figure out the solutions to their problems. In Sessions 2 and 4, she discussed problems three times and followed each with suggested solutions. However, by Sessions 7 and 9 she did
so in only 15 of the 20 instances. Her inclination to make suggestions seemed to have lessened and there seemed to be more emphasis on problem analysis. (The researcher is aware that three instances in Sessions 2 and 4 do not provide a strong basis for reaching a conclusion. However, the trend that emerged in Cha-Yang's case was consistent with the aggregate trend that emerged in the performance of the whole group.)

*Praising* was used least. After Session 2, it increased greatly, and she also began to combine it with *Mirroring* to make her statements more clear. In Sessions 4, 6, 7 and 9, she did so in 11 of the total of 21 instances. A typical example is her comment on Sho-Li's paper about her past and present study habits, as shown below.

I think Sho-Li's article is very interesting [*Praising (brief praise)*]. You give us very lively description and very clear comparison between before and after. And we can see you have changed a lot [*Mirroring (restating)*].

She seldom talked about the effects the writing achieved when she praised. However, her praise was still the most elaborate in the group.

On the whole, Cha-Yang made considerable improvement over the course, especially in the last two sessions. However, since her initial performance was superior to that of the others, her improvement may not seem as dramatic as Sho-Li's.
Peer Critiques

Cha-Yang’s performance in critiquing others’ texts was the best in the group, as shown in her before- and after-session peer critiques.

Before-session peer critiques.

Table 8 shows the numbers and types of comments recorded on Cha-Yang’s before-session peer critiques. (As in previous case studies, Assignment 2 was treated as a special case.)

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cha-Yang’s Comments on Before-Session Peer Critiques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cha-Yang made a total of 65 comments. There was no obvious increase or decrease in the quantity of comments as the course progressed. Content (42%) was the element most frequently commented on; Structure (29%) was second; Style
(18%) was third; and Clarity and Coherence (8%) was fourth. At Session 2, Cha-Yang commented only on two aspects: Content and Structure, and at Session 4 she was able to comment on all four aspects. She also managed to make very few general comments, which were too vague to be useful for revision. Cha-Yang was able to address more aspects earlier than the others in the group. Her total number of comments was also the highest.

1. Comments on Content.

Cha-Yang made 27 comments on Content. Her first strategy was to make general comments of praise concerning overall content. There were seven such instances. An example is her comment on An-Lin’s research paper: "Your ideas are very good, women’s question [problem] indeed exist in our society since a long time ago. It’s very nice that you draw up some points to discuss." Her second strategy was to discuss the validity of an idea or the strength of an argument. There were six such comments. Her third strategy was to suggest ideas that could be added to the content. There were five instances of this. Three of them recommended ideas that were more like extras that might enrich the content rather than additions that would remedy its inadequacy. An example is her response to An-Lin’s paper about the differences between parents and children: "Do you have any idea of improving the relationship between parents and children." These three comments seemed
inappropriate because they appropriated the authors' content and in fact might make the topics too broad to allow full development. Four other comments pointed out what the focus of the article was or what it should be, as exemplified in the following statement about Sho-Li's paper "How to Talk about Sex with Kids."

I think you don't give sufficient concrete ways for parents how to talk about sex with children. Since your topic is How to talk about sex with kids, you'd better provide positive ways for parents and teachers. (I notice you have suggest how to talk with kids in the 2, 3 paragraphs).

These comments were valuable. Two more comments suggested ways of developing an essay.

Two of the comments seemed problematic. An example is her comment on An-Lin's definition paper: "I like your article very much, although it's short, it is very concise and fluent. It's such a nice short article." In fact An-Lin's definition, which should have been the core of the essay, was seriously underdeveloped.

As the course progressed, the most noticeable improvement in the quality of her comments was that she seemed less inclined to take over the authors' content and better able to help them present their existing ideas more effectively. She made three comments that suggested additional ideas to be added in Sessions 4 and 6 but none in Sessions 7 and 9.

Compared with An-Lin and Sho-Li, Cha-Yang appeared to critique better, since she identified more problems, had
fewer comments that appropriate the authors' content, and made more comments that address whole-text level problems.

2. Comments on Structure

Cha-Yang made 19 comments on Structure. Her first strategy was to look into the format issues (e.g., elements that constitute an introduction). She made 10 comments about the format of argumentation, definition, and research papers, based on the teacher's handouts. For example, the handouts said that the introduction of an argumentation essay usually includes background information about the issue under discussion, the basic issue, the thesis statement, and a summary of the key arguments. Based on this Cha-Yang made many comments such as "The introduction is good, it have basis issue and background information, but you don't have the main points of your arguments, too." She seemed to follow the handouts very closely and was sometimes even a little inflexible about it. Eight other comments were suggestions or general praise about the overall structure of an essay. For example, she urged that in an argumentation paper each pro and each con should be in a separate paragraph. The remaining one comment suggested dividing a long introductory paragraph into two.

Of all comments, only one, which concerned format, was obviously problematic. In this case, she misread Sho-Li's argumentation paper and thought her thesis was not stated in the introduction. There were four other comments that were
not quite necessary even though they were not problematic, either. In these four she seemed overly bound by the rules she learned from the teacher's handouts and writing samples. Her suggestion about placing the pros and cons in separate paragraphs, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, serves as an example. The researcher disagreed with her since this rule should not always be applied, especially when the pro and con sections are very short. Once Cha-Yang focused her attention on a certain element, she tended to neglect many other problems in organization, structure, and format.

As the semesters advanced, Cha-Yang seemed to make fewer general comments about overall organization. In the second semester she focused mostly on the format for the development of ideas in argumentation and definition essays, as well as the format for citations in research papers. There was clearly strong adherence to the handouts.

3. Comments on Style.

There were 12 comments on Style. Six of them concerned the use of a story or example in an essay. An example is as follows.

It is good to start with a story to attract the readers, however, I think the story is like a cliche, personally speaking, I don't find it is interesting enough. You can make up another dramatic story, maybe it will be more attractive.

Three other comments were about language style. An example is "'Parents' and 'children' appear too many times, perhaps you can use other words or synonyms to replace it.
'Children'--> teenagers, kids, youngster." Three more comments were about the style for presenting ideas. An example is "Some of your points are sarcastic and I think it is very funny."

None of the comments were problematic. Compared with her peers, Cha-Yang was much more sensitive to style since she could comment on elements that went beyond the use of anecdotes or examples, and she was also able to point out problems rather than just praise.

4. Comments on Clarity and Coherence.

She made five comments on Clarity and Coherence. Three were laudatory comments, two of which were about the overall clarity of an essay and one about the logic and flow of ideas in a paragraph. An example of the former is her comment on Sho-Li's paper about her former and current study habits: "A clear comparison between before and after. We can see you've changed a lot." Two other comments identified specific problems, one pointing out the incoherence between the conclusion and the body of a paper, and the other pointing out an invalid statement. The former is as follows.

The whole article seems talking about positive changes on your studying, however, in the conclusion, the feeling is negative. They doesn't quite match for each other. Perhaps you can say it in a more positive ways.

All of her comments seemed acceptable. However, since only two comments identified problems specifically, she
seemed to be weaker in this area. Compared with the others, she still performed slightly better.

She made a total of 24 laudatory comments in five sessions. They were apparently her major strategy for establishing a good working relationship with the group. Eighteen of her comments were concentrated on five themes: overall content of an article (N=5), overall organization (N=4), effective use of an example or story in the introduction (N=4), format of an argumentation essay (N=3), overall clarity of an essay (N=2). Compared with her peers, Cha-Yang seemed able to look at a wider range of elements. As the course progressed Cha-Yang tended to make fewer general comments of praise that were not supported with justifications and more specific comments on the paragraph level. Both her whole-text and paragraph-level comments became more specific over time.

**After-session peer critiques.**

On the after-session peer critiques, Cha-Yang recorded a total of 17 comments: 2, 4, 8, and 3 respectively for Assignments 4, 6, 7, and 9. Eleven of these 17 comments concerned Content; 3 Style; 2 Clarity and Coherence; 1 Structure. Comments on Content were dominant, just as in her before-session peer critiques.

Of Cha-Yang's 59 before-session comments for Assignments 4, 6, 7, and 9, five (8%) changed after the discussion, indicating that the peer response sessions did
modify her previously formed ideas about the writing. None of the modified comments were problematic. Four of them actually reflected more accurate readings of the texts and were considered as improvements by the researcher. An example is her comment on Sho-Li's paper "How to Talk to Kids about Sex." The original comment and its modified version are presented below.

(Before session) When I read your introduction, I have a feeling that you are writing an essay on "Why we should talk about sex with kids" rather than "How to talk . . . ."

(After session) Actually when I re-read your paper, I find that the later part of your paper is talking about the methods of how to talk about sex. It is just the first two paragraphs give me a wrong idea. Maybe you can just change a little bit of the first 2 paragraphs. But I still think "Sex Education Nowadays," or something like that will be more appropriate because you have include the social situation and the unsuccessful sex education nowadays.

All the changes occurred in Sessions 6, 7, and 9, indicating that group discussion had a greater effect in the second semester.

Cha-Yang recorded 12 New comments. Together with the five Changed comments, she had 17 comments on her after-session critiques. Seven (41%) of these 17 comments coincided with opinions presented by her peers during the group discussion, indicating that she was learning to look at writing through others' eyes. None of these comments were problematic.

On the other hand, 10 out of the 17 (59%) comments did not coincide, indicating that the discussion also prompted
her to form new opinions. Three of them in fact were reactions to what her peers said during the discussion. An example is her comment on An-Lin's definition paper "Study," as shown below.

The word "study" itself has a very clear meaning, maybe it's not a good topic. However, I still think your topic is workable. You give a wider meaning to study. This comment was a response reflecting disagreement with Man-Hua's statement that the topic "study" was not worth writing about. The other seven comments could not be clearly traced back to any opinions expressed by her peers. Apparently the discussion induced the formation of new ideas. None of these new comments were problematic.

Self Critiques
Cha-Yang's self critiques were not as good as her peers critiques, even though her performance was still the best in the group.

Before-session self critiques.
Table 9 shows the numbers and types of comments Cha-Yang made on her before-session self critiques. (Session 9 was excluded because she did not write her self critique before the session.) She made only ten comments for four assignments, an average of 2.5 comments for a paper, which is less than she made for her peers' papers (an average of 4.3). Comments on Content were dominant, just as in her peer critiques.
Table 9

Cha-Yang's Comments on Before-Session Self Critiques

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1     (10%)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1     (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style, etc.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1     (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0     (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0     (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10    (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the seven comments on Content, four suggested adding ideas to the content. Three of the four vaguely pointed out that something could be added and only one stated it specifically. An example of the former is "Some more points will be added to develop the ideas completely." Only two of these seven comments identified specific problems. An example is "The conclusion is too weak." The other one was an explanation for the focus of her film review, rather than a critique of her writing, as shown below.

I like the movie very much. Actually there are many things in this movie worth noticing, such as the setting, the music, the technique, the color, etc. I choose tone and symbolic meaning because I think I am much confidence in talking about that.
Compared with her peer critiques, her self critiques tended to focus more on content. When she commented on content, she was less able to identify problems. In fact often she could only vaguely suggest adding ideas. This was very different from her peer critiques, in which she was able to point out specific flaws.

Cha-Yang seemed to have a better grasp of the other three major types of comments. She made one comment of each and each comment identified a specific flaw in the text. None of them appeared to be problematic. An example is her comment on organization: "The organization of some paragraphs have problems, in the second last paragraph, I shouldn't blend 2 ideas together."

Over time Cha-Yang was able to identify more problems and respond to more aspects of the writing. In Session 2 she made only one comment explaining the choice of her subject matter and was completely unable to talk about any flaws in the writing. By Session 4 she made three comments on Content and also the first one on Style. Two of these discussed specific problems in content and voice. By Sessions 6 and 7 she started to talk about weaknesses in coherence and organization. However, the number of these comments was very small, indicating that her self critiques were still limited.
After-session self critiques.

After the sessions, Cha-Yang recorded 15 comments on her self critiques for five assignments: 3 categorized as Changed and 12 as New. There were 12 on Content, 1 on Structure, 1 on Style, and 1 on Clarity and Coherence. This predominance of comments on Content can also be seen in her other critiques. None of the 15 comments were problematic.

Three of the 10 comments she made before the sessions changed. This shows that peer response had the effect of modifying her opinions. An example is her comment about whether her Essay 4 was objective. Both versions of her opinion are presented below.

(Before-session) Attitude is not objective enough.

(After-session) My attitude is objective after I ask their [my peers'] opinion.

None of the Changed comments coincided with opinions brought up by her peers during the group discussion. Of the 12 New comments, 10 (83%) coincided with comments brought up by her peers during the sessions. This high percentage shows that Cha-Yang integrated her peers' views into her thinking about her own writing. On the other hand, two comments did not coincide, showing that she was able to look at her own writing in new ways. These two comments were in fact her reactions to issues discussed by the group. One of them is "My definition is not clear, I’m still thinking of adding my own opinion at the end is good or not. It seems strange when I suddenly add my own idea." This comment was her
expression of doubt about the group's suggestion that she add her personal definition of "self-defense" at the end of her definition paper.

The fact that the majority of New and Changed comments (10 out of a total of 15) coincided with peers' opinions shows that what Cha-Yang said about her own writing after the sessions was closely tied to the group discussion. This means that peer response sessions functioned more as occasions for her to absorb what her peers thought rather than as opportunities for her to form new ideas. Cha-Yang repeatedly said it was very difficult for her to critique her own writing (Log 4). Apparently this was still true after the group discussion.

As to whether peer response was more effective in helping her form new opinions about her or her peers' writing, the findings showed contradiction. On the self critiques, 3 of the 10 (30%) comments were modified after the sessions, while only 5 of the 59 (8%) comments on the peer critiques were so. The group discussion seemed to have more effect on changing her opinions about her own writing than about her peers' writing. However, in the self critiques, 83% (10 out of 12) of the comments coincided with peers' opinions, while in the peer critiques only 41% (7 out of 17) did so. In this case, peer response seemed less effective in helping Cha-Yang form her own opinions about her drafts than about her peers'.
Reaction to Peers' Comments and Attitude

Toward Ownership of Texts

Cha-Yang received a total of 26 comments: 17 (65%) on Content; 4 (15%) on Structure; 3 (12%) on Clarity and Coherence; and 2 (8%) on Style. Of the 26 comments, she agreed with 11 (42%), disagreed with 13 (50%), felt unsure about 1 (4%), and did not understand 1 (4%). Since she disagreed more than she agreed, she did not appear to be very receptive of her peers' opinions. In the end she incorporated only 9 (35%) of the 26 comments she received, and she never felt compelled to incorporate those that she disagreed with or felt unsure about.

When Cha-Yang's revisions are checked against the comments on her before-session self critiques, it can be seen that her decisions to revise were not much influenced by her peers. On her self critiques she wrote nine suggestions. Six were confirmed by her peers and of these four were incorporated and two were not. As for the three that were not confirmed or were not even brought up during the group discussion, two were incorporated and one was not. Apparently Cha-Yang was quite independent as a reviser, as opposed to An-Lin, who made all the revisions that were confirmed by her peers and ignored the ones that were not.

Cha-Yang's sense of authority over her texts was also revealed in the way she managed the conflicts between her intentions as a writer and her peers' suggestions. There
were four instances in which she did not quite agree with the suggestions but was somehow swayed. In all these cases Cha-Yang finally assumed authority as the author and rejected her peers' ideas. An example is her reaction to Man-Hua's comment that the two quotations in her research paper ("Dangerous Sex--Condoms Vs. AIDS") were not worth quoting because they did not contain striking language. They are as follows.

Girls simply believe their boyfriends even they were screwing around nothing would happen because they said they would never do anything to mess their girls up.

If the girl looks clean and innocent, I will not use a condom. . . . If I decide that I need to wear a condom to have sex with a girl, I usually won't sleep with her at all.

Right after the peer response session, Cha-Yang was somehow persuaded and she considered paraphrasing the second quote. However, later on she decided that her quotes were acceptable because they contained ideas that were interesting enough to warrant quoting. Throughout the course, Cha-Yang had taken ownership of her texts very seriously. She herself was clearly aware of this.

Cha-Yang seemed to judge the comments very well. None of the comments she agreed with were considered problematic by the researcher and she also disagreed with all the six comments that were considered problematic. In fact the researcher could find fault with only one of her 26 judgements. This judgement concerned Man-Hua's statement that Cha-Yang's definition paper had only the legal
definition of "self-defense" but not her own definition, and that the whole paper was mainly about two child abuse court cases and not much about definition. Cha-Yang felt that she did include her own definition, which happened to be the legal definition. She believed that what made her peers think otherwise was the third-person voice she adopted. However, the researcher felt the real problem was that she allocated too little space for the definition. This failure was perhaps due to her lack of familiarity with the definition genre.

Cha-Yang’s rejection of her peers’ comments reflected not only her good judgement but also her strong sense of ownership of her writing. She sometimes also turned down comments that seemed acceptable to the researcher. In nine instances she ignored suggestions that contradicted her interests, style, and concepts of the audience. An example is Sho-Li’s suggestion that Cha-Yang include some definitions held by the public in her paper "Self-Defense." Cha-Yang decided she was interested only in the legal definition (Revision 6). She also rejected suggestions that indicated misreading of her texts. This occurred four times. In three cases, Cha-Yang’s judgements were accurate. For example, all of her peers said that the paragraphs were not organized in a meaningful order in her research paper. Cha-Yang rightfully felt that they did not read the paper carefully (Reaction 7). In addition, she turned down
suggestions that she did not know how to carry out and those that required too much work or disrupted the original structure. She did this twice.

Cha-Yang was very assertive in her ways of dealing with her peers' suggestions. In general, her decisions about whether to follow them were reasonable. Since she usually spent a lot of time planning her first drafts and was very sure of what she wanted to write and how to write it (Log 2), suggestions that took her off her original track were often discarded.

**Revision Performance**

Most of Cha-Yang's revisions were on the paragraph level and there was a slight increase in the amount of revision in the second semester. Throughout the year she never made any change that went beyond the paragraph level. There did not seem to be any clear trend in the length of the drafts. Essays 2, 4, 6, 7, and 9 increased 10% (459-->544 words), 98% (260-->514 words), 27% (712-->903 words), 2% (1007-->1026 words), and 44% (602-->869 words) respectively. Her revisions were much smaller than An-Lin's and Sho-Li's but larger than Man-Hua's in scale.

**Peer-Initiated Revisions**

In Assignment 2, Cha-Yang wrote a film review on the movie Blue Velvet. The first draft was reasonably well written. It centered around the major theme of the movie, the coexistence of good and evil, and was coherent. The
paragraphs in the body were adequately developed in appropriate proportions. She received four suggestions and incorporated only one. A paragraph about what the movie title meant and how it matched the movie was added, as shown below.

The title Blue Velvet is ambiguous. Why he chooses a kind of cloth to be the title. Velvet is a special kind of cloth. It gives you strange feeling. The color blue, gives you sad emotions. The title is matching the movie because both give you unescape feeling.

This paragraph enriched the content. However, it was inconsistent with the other paragraphs since it did not explain how the title specifically relates to the theme of the movie, as all the other paragraphs do. In addition, one problem that was not pointed out by her peers remained unsolved: a weak conclusion, consisting of only three short sentences. Cha-Yang said she failed to revise this paper well because she did not have enough time (Revision 2).

For Assignment 4 she wrote a comparison and contrast paper titled "Hong Kong Girls and Taiwan Girls." She received five suggestions and incorporated two. In response to a suggestion to expand on the discussion about girls' appearances in Paragraph 2 and social behaviors in Paragraph 4, she did so to a small extent by adding five sentences. In response to the comment that two ideas were mixed in Paragraph 3, she deleted one of them. Both revisions were positive. The amount of revision in this assignment was small because she did not know how to carry out what her
peers suggested, and also she did not totally agree with her peers' suggestions.

Her Assignment 6 was a definition paper titled "Self-Defense." In this paper she described two court cases in which two youngsters, who had been abused by their parents, killed their parents. She mentioned the controversy that ensued over the way self defense was defined in these two cases. For this paper, Cha-Yang received four comments but incorporated only one. The one she accepted was that the last paragraph discussing solutions to child abuse problems was a deviation from the essay. In response, Cha-Yang added a paragraph to discuss abused children's need for emotional support from their parents. It was used to lead into the discussion of solutions. However, instead of solving the problem, her revision made the matter worse by making the reader feel that even more space was devoted to the discussion of child abuse problems in a paper that already had too much about child abuse and too little about the definition of self defense. An accompanying problem was that this paragraph was not coherently integrated into the text. The above two problems might have resulted from her imitation of the way the conclusion was written in the sample paper given by the instructor. Cha-Yang's failure was probably a reflection of her lack of experience with the definition genre. In addition, there was one major problem that was pointed out by her peers but remained unsolved:
the discussion of self-defense should not have been limited to child abuse cases. Cha-Yang wanted to follow her peers' suggestion in this case, but could not think of a way to do it.

For Assignment 7, she wrote a research paper titled "Dangerous Sex--Condoms Vs. AIDS." The first draft was in general clear, well-organized, and interesting. She received seven suggestions for revision and incorporated two. Sho-Li thought the sentence that monogamy can stop casual sex did not make sense. To Sho-Li, monogamy meant a marital system in which one man and one woman are involved, and she felt it has been in practice for a long time but has failed to stop casual sex. Cha-Yang expanded one sentence into two and made her meaning clearer, as shown below.

(1st draft) A safer way to have sex is to keep on a monogamy.

(2nd draft) The safest way is don't sleep with any body at all. But abstinence may seem unrealistic, a safer way to have sex is to have a mutual monogamy--be faithful and honest to your lover.

To the comment that in Paragraph 6 two major ideas were mixed, she separated them into two paragraphs and expanded one of them slightly. This revision solved the problem but left another unsolved, a problem that was unmentioned by her peers. That is, one of the two ideas actually did not quite fit into the main focus of the essay, and this problem became more obvious after this idea was expanded into a short paragraph.
Her Assignment 9 was an argumentation paper titled "A Move to Ban Bordellos." Cha-Yang received six suggestions and incorporated three. She added a paragraph as a pro argument to discuss the devastating effects of prostitution on the family by using an emotional appeal. This addition did enrich the content but the language used was too emotional and did not match the rational tone of the paper. She also singled out a sentence from a paragraph and developed it into a con for this argument. However, it was too short and therefore inconsistent with the other paragraphs. The other revision involved Paragraphs 6 and 7, which were intended as a set of con and pro arguments. The former said that prostitution should be legalized so that the government could use the taxes paid by brothels for charitable causes. The latter said that prostitution contaminates morality and therefore the government should not treat it as legitimate business by collecting taxes from it. However, Sho-Li felt that the two paragraphs were irrelevant. In response, Cha-Yang added two sentences to explain. The two paragraphs are shown below with the added text underlined.

From the economic point of view, the brothels' licensing fees and taxes provide considerable revenues to national treasury. Some people say that prostitution exists no matter it is legalized or not. If it is illegal, it will only make brothel owners earn more because they don't have to pay taxes and licensing fees. So why don't just let them be legalized and collect taxes from them? This sum of money can be donated to charities.
Certainly there are lots of poor people need our help, such as orphans, elderly, homeless people, but definitely not from the hands of prostitutes or whoremongers. Prostitution itself is an immoral occupation no matter how much money it donates to the society. The main point is that it contaminates social morality, not the money it contributes. Prostitutes are one of the social problems that need our help, too. How can we just brighten up one side of the world but letting the other side being corrupted?

The added text did make her pro argument slightly clearer, but it still did not refute the con adequately. In response to a comment that prostitution is still illegal in Taiwan, she deleted three sentences that suggested prostitution is legal in Taiwan. In addition, one major problem that was not mentioned by her peers remain unsolved. That is, she mixed two idea in a paragraph that serves as a pro argument and one of these two ideas was not relevant to the con that it was supposed to oppose.

On the whole, Cha-Yang made nine peer-initiated revisions: 5 on Content; 2 on Structure, and 2 on Clarity and Coherence. Her major revising efforts were concentrated on Content, just as An-Lin’s and Sho-Li’s. The revisions she made on Structure, Clarity and Coherence were minor operations, such as adding, expanding, or deleting sentences, or dividing a paragraph into two. She seemed to be more successful with revisions that involved sentence or sub-sentence level operations (mostly additions). All her major revisions were at the paragraph level and these tended to be less effective. In many of her paragraph level revisions she either solved the problems only partially or
solved the problems but introduced new ones. Cha-Yang did not have the basic structural problems that An-Lin and Sho-Li had (e.g., failure to have a conclusion). Her problems were usually of a more subtle nature, such as incoherence, inconsistency in the overall tone of the paper, inappropriate proportion for a certain paragraph, or a misfit between the content and the genre. Solutions to most of these problems require holistic analysis of the texts. When compared with Sho-Li and An-Lin, Cha-Yang had less success with her revisions. This could probably be explained by the fact that she was dealing with more complicated problems.

**Self-Initiated Revisions**

Cha-Yang also made both higher- and lower-level revisions on her own. Essay 2 was an exception in which no self-initiated revisions were made. In Essay 4 she added a paragraph to discuss the family values of women in Taiwan and Hong Kong. She also transposed two paragraphs, combined two sentences, and added transitions. In Essay 6, she added three sentences to discuss the impact of a court case on the definition of self defense, changed one sentence in the conclusion to tone down her stand on the issue, and added one sentence to her story. She also did considerable rephrasing. In Essay 7 she added a paragraph to discuss the difficulty in practicing safe sex. There were also many changes in wording and punctuation. In Essay 9 she added
and deleted a few sentences and changed some words to make her ideas clearer. All the revisions improved the writing. She seemed to revise more on her own than in response to peers' suggestions.

**Summary**

Cha-Yang felt she benefitted from peer response to a certain extent, although not as much as she had expected. She thought its greatest value was to make her more aware of the way she wrote and more careful about content and organization. She liked writing and continued to enjoy it throughout the course. She enjoyed the group discussions and the friendship with her group members as well.

The critiquing strategy she most frequently used was making suggestions, followed by restating what the author did, discussing writing problems, and praising. Her performance improved considerably. The use of all types of strategies generally increased. At the beginning she had a mild tendency to make suggestions directly, but later she tended to make her suggestions more sophisticated by combining them with restatements of what the authors did and by discussing the problems. These discussions also became more elaborate over time.

The quantity and quality of the comments on her peer critiques were the highest in the group. The most frequent comments, in decreasing order, were on (a) content, (b) organization, structure, and format, (c) style and tone, and

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(d) clarity, logic, and coherence. She was better able than the others to comment on aspects other than content, and did so at an earlier stage. After the middle of the first semester, she began to make all four types of comments. All but three of her comments were valid. Her performance seemed to vary with the assignments. Over the course, her tendency to appropriate others' content decreased.

Cha-Yang seemed much less effective at critiquing her own writing than her peers'. Comments on content were still dominant in her self critiques. When she commented on content, she often vaguely suggested adding ideas and rarely identified problems. As for the other three aspects of the writing, she could point out problems specifically, but the number of such instances was small. Cha-Yang also believed that it was more difficult to critique her own writing and that her experience with self critiques did not help her with peer critiques.

Some of the comments on her after-session peer and self critiques coincided with opinions brought up by her peers during the sessions, indicating that she integrated her peers' ideas into her thinking about the texts. She modified some of the comments made before the sessions and also formed some new ones that did not coincide with her peers' opinions, suggesting that peer response did prompt her to form new opinions. Peer response also seemed more effective in helping her form new ideas about others'
writing but less effective in modifying her previous

opinions about it.

Cha-Yang was not as receptive to her peers' suggestions
for revision as Sho-Li or An-Lin. She used only 35% of
them. She did not incorporate all the comments on her self
critiques that were confirmed by her peers and she did
incorporated some that were not. When conflicts arose
between her own ideas and her peers', she never failed to
assume authority over her texts.

Cha-Yang's decisions about incorporating her peers'
suggestions were mostly reasonable. Most of the revisions
she made in response to these suggestions improved the texts
to a certain extent. Her major revisions were on the
paragraph level; they often solved problems identified by
her peers, but created new ones. These new problems were
usually of a subtle nature, such as inconsistency in tone.
Compared with others, she had less success, perhaps because
her problems were more complicated. She actually revised
more on her own than in response to her peers' suggestions.
As in the past, she made both higher- and lower-level
revisions, although not on a large scale. She continued to
revise quite independently all along.

Cha-Yang's experience with peer response was not as
satisfactory as she had wanted it to be, but she still
benefitted from it. If her teacher next year decides to use
peer response, she said she would be willing to have a few
sessions, but not as many as she did this year.
Chapter 7

A Case Study of Man-Hua: A Resistant Reviser

Man-Hua was a 22-year-old junior student in the English Department, who was slightly older than the other sophomores. She used to be a Japanese major before transferring to the English Department in 1992. While going to school full time, she taught math part time in an evening supplementary school for elementary school students. She had a very busy schedule, and the researcher's classes were the only times she met with her writing group. Therefore she did not develop as close a relationship with the group as did the other three members who met more often.

From talking to her, the researcher sensed that Man-Hua had a strong interest in learning English and was also confident in her ability. Occasionally in conversation classes the researcher saw contemptuous expressions on her face when her classmates were struggling to make presentations in broken English. She told the researcher on several occasions that she was shocked to find such poor students in the English Department.

In the first semester she seemed serious about her studies and handed in most of her homework on time. However, in the second semester, she turned in most of her homework late and there were signs of sloppiness in the work. She was also not as well prepared for her conversation exams or class presentations as she was in the
first semester. As to her class attendance, she was poorer than most of her classmates in both semesters. In the first semester she was absent from 6 out of the 28 class meetings and in the second 7.

Her relationship with the researcher deteriorated over time. In the beginning of the course, the researcher did not sense any unfriendliness in her. However, it started to surface in the last month of the first semester. She missed her interviews with the researcher three times without explaining why. Sometimes she also failed to greet the researcher when they happened to meet on campus. Her cold attitude to the researcher was very unusual since most Chinese students consider the teacher as an authority figure and would pretend to be friendly no matter how they feel. The researcher suspected that her attitude might have to do with her disappointment with the researcher's classes.

**Man-Hua as a Writer**

Man-Hua was the second strongest writer in her group. She did not think her writing ability was as good as she wanted it to be, but she had confidence in it (Log 1). As far as her content, writing skills, and command of English were concerned, she was about average in the class. She had some basic problems such as failure to have a conclusion or to devote appropriate proportions to the introduction, body, and conclusion of a paper. Like most other students in this
class, she was hampered by a small English vocabulary and inadequate grammar.

However, she had strong interests in writing. She reported,

"Writing is one of my favorite interests. I always practice writing some simple composition and short prose or short narrative article when I am free. . . . I can feel the strong power of existence and have the sufficient stamina to be alive through continuous thinking and writing (Log 1).

My most desireous plan is to write a short story, short novel, a little poem and the film review. I will treat them as a challenge which need to be conquered. Perhaps, I will take writing as my permanent profession and keep on writing without stopping (Log 7)."

Her strong interest was probably a result of winning the second prize in an English writing contest when she was in senior high school (Log 7). She was full of enthusiasm for writing at the beginning of the course (Log 1).

At the start of the course she conceived of revision as making changes in content, structure, and style, in addition to correcting language errors. She regarded revision as very important. However, in the past when she revised, she mostly corrected language errors (Log 1). She felt her difficulties lay in word usage and grammar and her strengths in organization and content (Log 7). She always spent much time planning the content and organization before writing first drafts (Revision 5).

**Man-Hua’s Experience with Peer Response**

Man-Hua had some experience with peer response in senior high school. Her English teacher asked the students
to correct language errors for each other and she felt she had learned much from this activity (Log 1). Therefore she had positive expectation for peer response. In her Log 1 she wrote, "I think that peer response is a very good and appropriate way for nowadays students to learn more about writing." She believed that peers could provide valid comments on organization, content, and tone. However, she did not think they could help much with grammar, spelling, or vocabulary, unless the errors were very obvious. Since she wanted help with language very much, she felt that peer feedback was not as good as teacher feedback, because peers could not help with this the way the teacher could (Reaction 2).

Man-Hua always submitted her first drafts right before the peer response sessions, allowing her peers only enough time to skim through them. In Session 2 she even failed to give her peers copies of her first draft and just read it aloud to them once. For Assignment 7, the researcher had to postpone the group’s responses to her until the next day to allow her peers time to read.

Her experience with peer response seemed to deteriorate over time. In Assignment 1 she was very satisfied with the performance of the group and used all her peers’ suggestions in revising. At Session 2, she received two suggestions and no praise. She felt Cha-Yang’s suggestions were helpful, but she was not sure about incorporating them. She said, "I
would take her comments into consideration, but my own ideas are important too" (Reaction 2). She felt she did not receive help from Sho-Li or An-Lin, but she appreciated the sincerity, honesty, and enthusiasm they showed (Log 5). By Session 4, the group devoted only 1.2 minutes to her draft and she received only some general praise and one suggestion that she needed a title. She was angered that she did not get useful feedback, and she suspected that her group did not read her essay carefully and were not interested in getting her feedback on their writing either. She complained,

They have no patience to read my article. I feel they don’t even want to get any opinion or suggestions from other peers. They just want to shorten the time and could get out to do their thing. Even when I just read my critique sheet, they are all busy about their own thing. They didn’t even listen very clearly about what I am saying. They just do their after-session peer critique sheet (Reaction 4).

The researcher observed that when the group discussed writing, most of the time they listened to each other attentively. Man-Hua’s perception seemed to be distorted, perhaps a result of her anger. Disappointed, she decided to revise on her own. She said,

Sometimes doing something by my own self, in my opinion, I would feel sometimes easier. Because I can do whatever I want. . . . Because I know very clear about what I was writing. If I get a lot of ideas from others, I will feel confusing, which one I should take it and which one I should just ignore (Revision 4).

Session 6 was a more fruitful experience for her and she enjoyed it a little. She received five suggestions and
some praise. She admitted: "I should say if we don't have peer response, maybe I won't change [revise] so much" (Revision 6). However, after Session 7, her interest in the group declined sharply. In this session, she received 11 suggestions (some of which pointed out her major problems) but no praise. She seemed very defensive and felt she did not get any useful suggestions at all (Revision 7). In Sessions 9, she received eight comments and some praise. Most of the comments suggested extra arguments she could add to her paper. At revision she rejected all of them because she was interested in only the arguments she already presented. She told the researcher that she never expected any helpful comments from her peers throughout the course. At the end of the year, she said she had wasted her time with peer response and that she felt like skipping classes on the days scheduled for it (Exit interview).

Man-Hua trusted Cha-Yang's ability to write and to critique writing, but not An-Lin's and Sho-Li's. She felt the writing of the latter two was naive and uninteresting (Reaction 7). Even though she would sometimes try to be nice by praising a piece of writing she really thought was unsatisfactory, occasionally she would also express her low opinion of a piece openly. For example, on An-Lin's Paper 4, she said, "Some words are repeated several times, such as 'always,' and that mean your writing is poor and your
vocabulary is too limited." However, she did not feel apologetic about her criticism. She said,

Yeah, I am very honest. I just want her to know she should do better than before. I just think she is not very- make effort... We are adult. You should accept others' opinion, different, good or bad. That you should do. But I know she won't feel unhappy, because she and Shirley respect me and Cha-Yang, because we are Shuei-jei [a Chinese term for a student senior in class standing, literally meaning "elder sister at school"] (Reaction 4).

She also distrusted her peers' ability to read critically. This distrust surfaced even as early as Session 2.

Perhaps as a result of her disappointment with peer response, Man-Hua's learning attitude deteriorated. In Assignments 6, 7 and 9 she failed to read her peers' drafts before the sessions, to write before-session critiques, or to give after-session critiques to her peers for revision. She told the researcher she felt less motivated to do the assignments for the class in the second semester. The researcher did notice more careless language errors in her writing. She also said she had lost her personal writing style as a result of participating in peer response.

However, the researcher did not think so because Man-Hua rejected most of the comments and her revisions were so limited that her style could not have been affected. Her misperception seemed to be a reflection of her negative feelings about peer response.

To her, one problem with peer response was that it invaded a writer's privacy. She said,
Sometimes we write something privacy. . . . I don’t want others to read. So I cannot write everything I want to say. We might be afraid somebody steal your personal experience from reading your paper. That’s very practical question. It’s kind of protecting ourselves (Focus group).

Another problem was that the students sometimes did not have enough time to read the drafts carefully and thus could not give quality comments. Also she felt she was not getting enough help on language, which was something she needed very much. Occasionally it was also a nuisance to have to consider her peers’ comments (Focus group).

At the end of the course, even though she became less motivated to write her class assignments, she still had not lost interest in writing in the future (Exit interview). She did not think peer response increased her audience awareness. The way she perceived her own writing difficulties had not changed either. Throughout the year she felt that her problems lay in word usage and grammar (Logs 2, 7). Her peers pointed out some of her higher-level problems, but she still did not seem to be aware of them. However, she did sense one positive change in her writing: she revised more than she did in her freshman year, when she hardly revised at all (Exit interview).

At the end of the course, when asked about what she perceived as the value of peer response, she said she did not think peer response was a good teaching method. To her the value of peer response lay less in the help it provided for revision than in the opportunities it presented for
practicing conversation and developing communication skills. She indicated that individual conferences with the teacher and class handouts were the most effective elements in this course. She would not welcome the opportunity to have peer response next year (Exit interview).

Even though Man-Hua was not happy with the feedback she received from her group members, she seemed to feel at ease with them and actually enjoyed the group process at Sessions 2 and 6. She believed that she could talk freely in the group most of the time (Log 8). At the end of the semester she still had good feelings about her peers as classmates (Exit interview).

**Man-Hua's Perception of Herself as a Critiquer**

Even though Man-Hua always inconvenienced her peers by turning in her drafts at the last minute, she complained that sometimes her peers did this to her. She said she could not give good feedback because of this (Log 6). She disliked writing peer critiques, and said,

> I don't like to write peer critique sheets because it is very impolite [impolite] and difficult, sometimes beyond my ability to criticize or give suggestion to peer's article. It also will take me a long time to write it and it is a hard and unpleasant time (Log 8).

However, at the end of the course, she thought she improved her performance, especially her critiques for An-Lin (Exit interview).

As for her self critique, she felt she improved a little, but not as much as she did in her peer critique.
(Exit interview). She did not think she could do a good job. She said, "For the self critique, I spend less time to write it. Because I am too confident to find my weakness most of the time" (Log 9). To her, self critiques were beneficial because they functioned as reminders of the things she needed to do in her second drafts.

She felt there was a close relationship between peer and self critiques. She said,

I do think that my critiquing of others' writing help me critique my own writing, critiquing my own writing also help me critique others' writing and listening to others critique others' writing also help me critique either my own or others' writing (Log 9).

To her, peer and self critique were similar tasks (Revision 5).

**Performance in Critiquing Writing**

Man-Hua's critiquing ability was better than Sho-Li's and An-Lin's in the initial stage, but she seemed to have made the least improvement over the course.

**Strategies Used in Responding to Texts**

The strategies Man-Hua used to respond to her peers' texts are quantified in Table 10. The strategy she most frequently used was Helping, followed by Responding, Praising, and Mirroring. This indicates that she considered making suggestions as the most important function of the group. In the first semester, there was increase in the numbers of instances and types of strategies she used. In Session 6 the number of instances kept up. However, it
Table 10

Man-Hua’s Responding Strategies: Types and Instances of Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Praising</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief praise</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantiated praise</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirroring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem identification</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem analysis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

decreased sharply in Sessions 7 and 9, perhaps as a result of her negative feelings about peer response. Her total number of instances was the lowest in the group.

*Helping* was the strategy she used almost exclusively at the beginning. In the second semester the number of instances of its use clearly decreased. However, there was improvement in the sophistication she showed when presenting
suggestions. At Sessions 2 and 4, she responded by making suggestions directly, as indicated by 7 of 8 instances in which she did so without discussing problems first. In only one instance did she combine Helping with Mirroring. At this stage most of her suggestions were characterized by a strong inclination to tell the authors her own ideas about the issues being written about. She did not have the skill to help the authors explore what they wanted to write, and perhaps was unaware that she was appropriating the author's content. For example,

Would you talk about the actor- because I think Sean Connery is also excellent. I see this movie before. But you know, in my opinion, I don’t think he did a good job, as usual [as he used to]. I don’t know how you feel. But I see- I just suggest you can talk about that, if you think that’s available [feasible] [(Helping (suggestion)].

In Sessions 4, 6, 7, and 9, she combined Helping with Mirroring in 6 of 14 instances, and with Responding in 10. Her suggestions became much more sophisticated over time. An example is as follows.

I have the same idea with Sho-Li. Because I didn’t see your own opinion, because I think this assignment definition should come from your own opinion. I see a very good example and well developed [Mirroring (restating)]. But for me, it’s more like a detailed description of story. Yeah, very detailed, and very clear. But for me, I don’t see your own opinion [Responding (problem identification)]. I think it might be good if you add a paragraph about your opinion, or your thinking about these two cases [Helping (suggestion)].

She used Helping (suggestion) more often than Helping (collaboration). Over the course, there was a slight
indication that her suggestions became more elaborate over time. Of the 22 instances of Helping, three were categorized as Helping (collaboration), and they all occurred in the second semester. Her most extended suggestion is presented in the next paragraph.

Responding is the second most frequent strategy. She did not use this at Session 2, and the number of instances increased sharply at Session 4. However, it dropped obviously in the second semester. On the whole she used Responding (problem identification) more often than Responding (problem analysis). As the course progressed, there was a tendency for her talk about problems to become more extended. In the first semester she did not analyze problems in detail but in the second she did so in five instances. An example of Responding (problem analysis) is the following comment that the content of An-Lin’s definition paper did not fit the requirement of a definition paper, and that "study" was not an interesting topic. The example also showed her inaccurate and confusing metalanguage.

m: I think you make too much stress on the importance of study, but not the definition. Your own opinion is- one two three lines, I think it’s too weak. The whole previous paragraph is all about importance of study, of what kind of things we have to study, but not the definition of study. So I think maybe you can add more idea about the personal idea about study.

[An-Lin explained why she wrote much about the importance of study.]
m: That's why I say this topic is a little bit serious. If you focus on the only importance, because it could be like an [expository essay], just explain why we have to study, what we have to study. It's not the assignment required [confusing metalanguage] [Responding (problem analysis)]. Maybe you can change another topic. Maybe you can write more, something more interesting. . . .

[Cha-Yang and An-Lin responded.]

m: You have to define what is study.

[An-Lin said she intended to define "the importance of study."

m: Then you should change your topic to the importance of study. Very strange.

[Cha-Yang responded.]

m: Maybe you can try another topic. What is your original topic, do you remember?

[Man-Hua consented to one of An-Lin's original topics.]

m: Maybe you could say study is- I give you an example. For everyone study is read book. To learn knowledge from a book. Study can mean learn the survival skills [Helping (collaboration)].

As the course progressed, her tendency to follow discussions of problems with suggestions decreased to a certain extent. In Sessions 4 and 6, in 9 of 10 instances she included suggestions, but in Sessions 7 and 9 this occurred in only 1 of 5 instances. Like all the others in the group, as time progressed, she focused more on showing what needed to be fixed instead of on how to fix it.

Praising was the third most frequent strategy. She did not use it until Sessions 4, and its use dropped greatly in the last two sessions. Her praise was usually brief and never substantiated with discussion about the effects of the
writing. She did not combine it with *Mirroring* until Session 6, and there were only two such instances in the second semester. An example is shown below.

I like your first paragraph. It's very clever created [Praising (brief praise)]. We can see two very different but typical definition of "rich" [Mirroring (restating)]. So I like your first paragraph.

*Mirroring* was the least used strategy. It was always on a very factual level and was never combined with discussion of the effects of the writing. The example shown above is a typical one.

Man-Hua's critiquing strategies seemed to have improved in quality after one year of training. However, the number of instances decreased over time, perhaps an indication of her refusal to make efforts. Man-Hua's performance was the weakest in the group.

**Peer Critiques**

For Assignments 2, 6, 7, and 9, Man-Hua wrote only after-session peer critiques. Assignment 4 was the only one in which she wrote critiques both before and after the session. The 45 comments she wrote for Assignments 2, 6, 7, and 9 are divided into two types: the 21 comments that coincided with her peers' comments and the 24 that did not. The researcher assumed that the former came from Man-Hua's peers and therefore were not considered as her own opinions. The latter were treated as comments she could have made before the sessions, and they were combined with the
comments she wrote on her before-session critique for Session 4 in the following discussion.

**Before-session peer critiques.**

Table 11 shows the types and numbers of the comments Man-Hua made for her peers before the sessions.

**Table 11**

Comments on Man-Hua’s Before-Session Peer Critiques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27 (71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Man-Hua made an average of 2.5 comments for each paper, reflecting the poorest performance in the group. Comments on Content were dominant, and other types of comments were very scarce. She also made three comments categorized as General. In the first semester, her comments increased, but they started to decrease in the second. In Session 2, she commented solely on Content, but she began to look at other
aspects as well at Session 4, much like Sho-Li and An-Lin did.

She made 27 comments on Content. Eight of them were sweeping comments of praise about the topic choice or the overall content. An example is "A very good topic, because it is controversial and significant." She praised the idea expressed in a paragraph as being good in four instances and criticized it as being weak in eight instances. The above three types of comments showed that she mechanically responded in similar ways to all the papers. In four instances she suggested extra ideas to be added to the content, most of which were ideas that were not essential to the development of existing ideas. All four instances occurred in Session 2, indicating she had a strong tendency to take over the authors' content at the beginning. In only three comments did she identify specific problems. For example, she correctly pointed out that in Sho-Li's paper "Should people live together before they get married?" the term "trial marriage" should have been used instead of "cohabitation," since the paper talked about couples with the intention to get married. None of the 27 comments seemed problematic.

Man-Hua made eight comments on Clarity and Coherence, Structure, and Style. Six of them addressed specific problems, one praised overall clarity, and one vaguely pointed out the overuse of certain words. Only one was
problematic, and it showed her blind belief in the function of topic sentences: "You should add a more strong statement for each paragraph, especially the body which is the comparison. A topic sentence will enrich your writing." This comment also showed her metalanguage to be inaccurate and unclear. Problems like this occurred more than once. However, on the whole, she seemed better able to discuss problems in these areas than in content. The most valuable comment was her identification of Sho-Li's serious problem of bringing up many new ideas in the conclusion of her argumentation paper. Man-Hua said, "Last paragraph is not a conclusion. You bring [up] a lot of new ideas."

She made three General comments, more than any other group member did. Two of the three comments seemed like empty praise. One of them even contradicted another comment she made on the same paper. The two contradictory comments were about An-Lin's definition paper:

This is a very good essay about study. I like it.

Be honestly, this topic could not arouse much interest of the reader, because it is too serious and boring. Maybe, you can change another topic, find something new and worth developing.

She might have made the former without reading the draft carefully, and perhaps after listening to the group discussion, she changed her mind. Or maybe she first tried to be nice by praising the essay and later on decided to be honest.
Man-Hua's critiquing style could also be revealed through the way she praised. In her 15 comments of praise, she focused mechanically on a small number of aspects and made general statements that did not require much textual analysis. In eight instances she praised the topic choice or overall content, and in six she praised the whole essay or an idea in a paragraph as simply being good. Since Man-Hua did not read the drafts carefully, she probably praised in this "rubber stamp" manner just to cope with the responding task.

The quality of her comments showed slight improvement over time, even though the quantity did not. In Session 2 she was able to suggest only ideas to be added, but at Session 4 she began to address aspects beyond content and also to point out a small number of specific problems. At Session 9 she was even able to point out two major problems. All four instances of appropriation of content occurred in Session 2, and there were none in later sessions. However, compared with her group, her performance was the poorest.

After-session peer critique.

After the group discussion in Session 4, none of Man-Hua's before-session comments were modified. The four New Comments Man-Hua recorded all coincided with her peers' opinions. This shows that the group discussion gave her a chance to know what her peers thought about the drafts but it did not stimulate her to form new ideas.
Self Critiques

Just as her peer critiques, Man-Hua's before- and after-session self critiques showed the least improvement and were the poorest in the group.

Before-session self critiques.

For Assignments 2, 6, 7, and 9, Man-Hua did not write before-session self critiques but wrote 11 comments on her after-session ones. Four of these did not coincide with her peers' comments and were treated as before-session comments. They are combined with the four before-session comments she made for Assignment 4 in the following discussion. Table 12 shows the numbers and types of such comments she made on her self critiques before the sessions.

Table 12

Comments on Man-Hua's Before-Session Self Critiques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 (63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8 (101%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Man-Hua made an average of 1.6 comments on each of her papers. Comments on Content were dominant. Of the five comments on Content, two were praise (one about a good topic choice for her definition paper and the other the effective use of emotional appeal in her argumentation paper). One was a reminder to herself to include all the reading sources she used for her research paper. Another one was an explanation of her topic choice. The remaining one vaguely stated a paragraph was weak. The two comments on Style vaguely suggested that certain words were overused but did not specify which ones. The one comment about Structure even showed her blind belief in using topic sentences to fix problems in weak content again. On the whole, she was very ineffective in identifying her own problems.

Most of the comments on her before-session self critique resembled closely the ones that she made on her before-session peer critiques. She seemed to be mechanically repeating a narrow range of types of comments without analyzing the texts closely. Compared with her peer critiques, her self critique was much less effective in identifying problems.

**After-session self critique.**

The after-session critique Man-Hua wrote at Session 4 shows that none of her before-session comments were modified, and the only comment she recorded as a *New Comment* also coincided with one of her peers' opinions. As in her
peer critiques, she learned how her peers saw her texts from the group discussion, but it never helped her form new ideas.

Man-Hua's poor performance in both her peer and self critique may be the result of her withdrawal from group activities. As the course progressed, she seemed to make less and less effort.

Reactions to Peers' Comments and Attitude

Man-Hua always appeared unreceptive to her peers' suggestions. She agreed with only 4 (15%) of the 27 she received and rejected the rest. She claimed that she thought of three of these while she was writing. Her second drafts showed that she made eight revisions that corresponded to the suggestions (30% of the suggestions received). However, she claimed that only one of them were prompted by her peers.

Man-Hua said she rarely felt pressured to use her peers' suggestions (Exit interview). When her ideas and those of her peers conflicted and caused her to waver, she always insisted on her own ways in the end. She received 27 comments from her peers and felt slightly swayed by only one comment for Essay 2. In her revision she rejected this suggestion. That is, in response to Cha-Yang's advice that plot, theme, and acting should not all be discussed in a brief two-page film review, she said to the researcher,
Cha-Yang said I should pick one thing and develop it more fully. I think so too. I think that’s what a film reviewer should do. But there are so many things I’d like to say about this movie. . . . I would take her comment into consideration. . . . But my own ideas are important too (Reaction 2).

She rejected the suggestion on the grounds that she actually focused more on the theme, instead of all three things. This struggle over whether to incorporate a peer’s suggestion only occurred in Assignment 2, when she still had some trust in peer response.

Man-Hua claimed that only one of her peers’ suggestions prompted her to revise. However, the researcher noticed that sometimes Man-Hua used her peers’ suggestions but was unwilling to admit it. When she turned in the second draft of her research paper, she told the researcher that for this assignment she revised completely on her own and did not even looked at her peers’ critique sheets. However, the researcher noticed five revisions that corresponded to five comments Cha-Yang brought up during the group discussion or recorded on her critique sheet. The following comment and its corresponding revision serve as an example.

**Comment:** The topic "The Greatness of Michelangelo" is very broad. Since you talk about the sculpture Moses only, in the introduction you should tell the reader your paper would focus on sculpture only.

**Revision:** [A sentence, underlined below, was added to explain why she focused on sculpture.]

He was not only just an excellent painter, moreover, he was an outstanding sculptor, architect and poet. Therefore, his intelligence was beyond description. Among these artistic business, he got more delight in seeing a marble body. As a result, I would like to
choose one of his successful sculpture to show his brilliance.

Man-Hua claimed that she had realized the need for this revision herself and that she did not even remember Cha-Yang's comment (Revision 7).

The researcher speculates that some of the correspondences probably occurred because Man-Hua had made notes on her first draft when she was listening to Cha-Yang's comments. The researcher checked the notes and found that they corresponded with four of the five revisions Man-Hua made. As additional evidence that she probably did refer to the critique sheet, she made a change that corresponded to a comment on the critique sheet, and that was never brought up during the session. That is, Cha-Yang wrote on the critique that the word "pilgrimage" was too common a word to warrant quoting. On the second draft, Man-Hua removed the quotation marks. The researcher believes that in all the five cases mentioned above Man-Hua might have been too resentful of her peers to acknowledge their influence. It also might be possible that the group discussion had an effect on her that she was not conscious of. Man-Hua herself was aware of her strong sense of ownership of her writing. She said, "Sometimes we have to choose [whether to incorporate peers' suggestions]. For me, I always try to insist on my own personal writing style." (Focus group).
Man-Hua received 27 comments and none of them were really problematic. Some of them represented the responders' preferred ways of writing and therefore might not necessarily improve Man-Hua's writing, but the rest did identify small or big problems that should be solved. At least five of them pointed out major problem and therefore were valuable. For example, Sho-Li pointed out the logical flaw in Man-Hua's definition of a hero in her definition paper: "A hero in my mind, he need not to achieve a great accomplishment because not every accomplished man is hero."

As to her ability to judge her peers' comments, none of the four comments she agreed with were problematic. Regarding the 23 suggestions that she rejected, some of her rejections were based on her personal taste for or interest in writing and therefore were acceptable. However, in other cases her rejections showed that she was too defensive to see the value of the comments. She turned down five comments that pointed out major problems. For example, in the research paper Man-Hua tried to discuss four aspects of Michelangelo's art. Cha-Yang felt that four aspects were too many to allow ideas to be adequately developed. She even noticed that in the conclusion Man-Hua claimed to have discussed four aspects in the body of the paper but in fact one was not discussed at all. Man-Hua dismissed this comment by saying that Cha-Yang did not understand her
writing. Man-Hua's rejections showed her inadequate understanding of her writing problems.

Revision Performance

From the first to the second drafts the number of words in Man-Hua's Essays 2, 4, 6 and 9 increased by 26% (918-->1161 words), 4% (708-->736%), 19% (524-->624 words), and 10% (577-->633 words) respectively. The increases seemed very small. However, the second draft of Essay 7 decreased by 5% (876-->831 words).

Peer-Initiated Revisions

In Assignment 2, Man-Hua wrote a film review about Dead Poet's Society. She received two suggestions and incorporated one. In response to the suggestion that she talk about the suicide event in the movie, she add a paragraph about it. This paragraph did enrich the content, but it did not fit into the structure of the paper. In the first draft, Paragraph 2 was a summary of the story, and Paragraphs 3 and 4 were discussions of the major themes. The added paragraph recounted the suicide event and the theme it carried, and therefore it should have been integrated into Paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. Man-Hua was unaware of the restructuring the added paragraph required. Her peers did not point out the lack of a conclusion, and this problem also remained in the second draft.

In Assignment 4, she wrote a comparison and contrast paper about her sister and her. She received one
suggestion, to provide a title, which Man-Hua had already thought of. In response, she created the title, "Like Sister, like me," which was not grammatical.

For Assignment 6 she wrote a definition paper titled "What is hero?" She received five suggestions and carried out two. In response to the comment that her introduction was too long, she divide it into two paragraphs and expanded the second by adding three sentences and some words. The first version of the introduction is presented below with the section that turned into the second paragraph underlined.

What is hero? It is a easy but also difficult question to answer. According to the old standard, it is easy to answer. When we read the literary works, we can easily figure out the requirement of being a hero. A hero, he must undertake a challenge or difficulty which maybe kills a terrible monster or resist the temptation from the devil power; then, he has to run through the hardest journey; and conquer the obstacle and survive in the battle. We can see a lot of this kind of hero appearing within the literature, especially in the mythological story, such as Oedipus. As for now, the standard are changed and the way to judge a hero is complex. For the majority, a hero must do something significant to his country and people, protect his country to attack the enemy. Those who so called hero must be successful, famous, and brave according to public judgement, such as a president or a commodore and they always appear in war.

Man-Hua’s revision failed because the problem involved was in fact more complicated than her peers’ pointed out. The introduction was not only too long but it had also gone into a discussion of the definition. The other comment pointed out a logical flaw in a sentence and she solved the problem by substituting the phrase "on the contrary" for "that is to
say." After the revisions, she still had two major problems: the lack of a conclusion, and the mismatch between her definition and the example she gave to illustrate it. An-Lin identified the first problem but Man-Hua failed to recognize it.

Assignment 7 was a research paper titled "Penetrating the greatness of Michelangelo by Moses." She received 11 suggestions and incorporated four. In response to the suggestion that the introduction was too long, she solved the problem by dividing it into two paragraphs. She also deleted two problematic sentences that her peers pointed out. To a suggestion that she tell the reader why she focused on sculpture rather than some other form of art, she added a sentence to make her intention clearer. After the revisions, two major problems that she had in her first draft remained. The first was that in the body she did not discuss all four aspects of Michelangelo's art that she claimed to have discussed in her conclusion. This was identified by Cha-Yang but Man-Hua rejected it. The other major flaw was insufficient discussion of the main ideas.

In Assignment 9 she wrote an argumentation paper titled "Mercy killing: Cure or murder?" She received eight comments but did not incorporate any. One major flaw was that some of her arguments were not adequately supported. Since her peers did not point this out, she was not aware of it either.
Her peer-initiated revisions were very limited. She made 8 revisions: 4 on Content, 3 on Structure, and 1 on Clarity and Coherence. The largest revision was the addition of a paragraph in Assignment 2. Her other paragraph level revisions involved the division of a paragraph into two in two instances. In most of these revisions success required restructuring the whole essay or rewriting the whole paragraph, which seemed to be beyond her ability. She was more successful with simple changes such as addition or deletion of sentences or phrases to provide missing information or avoid redundancy. After the revisions, most of her major problems remained unsolved. She seem incapable of reassessing her texts and making large-scale changes in content and form.

**Self-Initiated Revisions**

Man-Hua initiated many meaning-preserving changes on her own in Assignments 2, 4, 6, and 7, and a few in Assignment 9. The largest revision was deleting two sentences. Most of the changes were adding, deleting, or rephrasing on the phrase or word level, with the intention of making the meaning clearer, the ideas slightly more developed, or the language more acceptable. Her self-initiated revisions were also very limited.

**Causes of Man-Hua's Negative Experience**

The researcher speculates that the mismatch between Man-Hua’s schedules for writing first drafts and the class’
schedules for peer response sessions might have contributed to Man-Hua's unfortunate experience with peer response. Her habit of turning in drafts very late probably resulted in the small number of comments she received for Assignments 2 and 4. By the second semester, even though she received more suggestions and some of them were in fact very valuable, she was perhaps already too disappointed to feel motivated to hand in her drafts well ahead of time or to appreciate the comments. This created a vicious cycle which made it hard for her to benefit from peer response.

Her age, status, strong personality, and pride in her writing ability might have combined to make it hard for her to accept suggestions from her peers. Since she was slightly older than the others and was also working as a teacher at the time, she might have felt uncomfortable about taking advice from younger peers. The fact that she started to feel defensive about her writing as early as Session 2 suggests that she might also have the kind of personality that made her unreceptive of criticism. Her strong pride in her writing ability combined with occasional failure to receive praise may also have caused antagonistic attitudes towards peer response. This is suggested by the fact that her defensive explanations occurred mostly in Sessions 2 and 7, in which she did not receive any praise, and not in Sessions 4, 6, and 9, in which she received quite a lot.
Her misconceptions about what constituted helpful comments were also counterproductive. Her first misconception was that she did not believe that a reader who did not know her subject matter could give good suggestions. She was totally unaware that the reader's unfamiliarity with the subject could provide perspectives on what was needed to turn writer-based prose into reader-based prose. For example, after Session 4 in which the group discussed her paper about her sister and her, she told the researcher that she did not expect to get any suggestions because her peers did not know her sister. Such a misconception might have given her a sense of futility about participating in the session for the research paper, for which she chose a topic unfamiliar to her peers.

Her second misconception was that a good responder should comment by identifying problems or making suggestions, instead of asking questions. In Session 7 Cha-Yang employed the strategy of questioning often, in an attempt to induce Man-Hua to explore the reasons behind the content and form chosen. To Man-Hua, questions simply meant her peers did not understand her writing and therefore were useless for revision (Revision 7). She seemed better able to appreciate prescriptive responses. In Sessions 2 and 6, she received a few comments that clearly identified problems and offered solutions, and she considered them as useful (Revisions 2, 6).
The researcher is aware that the above factors might not be the only ones that led to Man-Hua's frustration with peer response. Since Man-Hua's relationship with the researcher deteriorated over time, it was possible that Man-Hua had come to dislike any teaching method that the researcher employed. In addition, Man-Hua's falling confidence in her writing could also have contributed to her negative experience. This was shown by one instance in which she told the researcher that over the course she had come to feel disappointed about her writing (Revision 6).

**Summary**

Man-Hua began the course with positive expectations, but as it progressed, she became more disappointed. Toward the end she totally rejected her peers' suggestions for revision. She lost some motivation to do the writing assignments for this class, even though she retained her strong interest in writing in general. She also did not think peer response increased her audience awareness. However, she did enjoy her group members as friends.

The strategy she used most often to critique her peers' texts was making suggestions, followed by discussing problems, praising, and restating what the authors did. The quality of her performance improved to a certain extent. However, the quantity increased only in the first semester, and then dropped sharply in the second. As the course progressed, her suggestions grew more sophisticated as she
began to combine them with restatements of what the authors wrote and discussions of problems. Her suggestions and discussion of problems also became slightly more elaborate. In the middle of the second semester she seemed to become less suggestion-oriented.

The comments Man-Hua wrote on her before-session peer critiques were the poorest in the group. Mostly she focused on content and very rarely brought up other aspects of the writing. Most of her comments were praise and she pointed out only a few problems. Even though only one comment seemed problematic, her comments were generally not very helpful. She tended to make the same types of comments repetitively. However, the quality of her comments did improve slightly. As the course progressed, she tended to shift from an exclusive concern with content to a broader view of writing. She also stopped making comments that appropriated the authors' content early in the course.

Man-Hua recorded an extremely small number of comments on her before-session self critiques. Her emphasis was on content here as well. The comments revealed an inability to point out specific problems and a rigid adherence to a certain writing rule. Most comments closely resembled those she put on her peer critiques, showing a failure to detect problems unique to her own texts. Her self critiques were much less effective than her peer critiques. She believed she made only limited progress with them, much less than
with the peer critiques, even though she felt the skills involved should reinforce each other.

None of the before-session comments on her peer and self critique changed after the group discussion, and all the new comments on her after-session critique coincided with her peers' opinions. Peer response was an opportunity for her to learn about her peers' ideas rather than as an opportunity to form new ones.

Man-Hua seemed unreceptive of her peers' suggestions. She incorporated only 8 (30%) of the suggestions and claimed that only one revision was the result of a peer's comment. She had a strong sense of ownership of her writing and was often too defensive to see the value of her peers' comments. Whenever she had a conflict with her peers about her writing, she always insisted on doing it her way.

Her revisions were very limited. In the small number of paragraph-level revisions she made, she often solved problems partially but created new ones. In general, the second drafts improved a little, but she left many problems unsolved. She could not assess her texts on a higher level. Peer response did prompt her to make a small number of substantive revisions, which was an improvement, since she previously made mostly surface-level changes. However, most of her revisions were still only surface level.

Her disappointing experience with peer response was probably the result of a vicious cycle she created by
turning in her drafts late. Her age, status, personality, confidence in her writing, misconception about what constituted effective feedback may also have played a role. Man-Hua’s experience with peer response was the most negative in the group. She did not want to participate in a peer response class again.
Chapter 8

Student Interaction at Peer Response Sessions

To show the dynamics of the group, the researcher will discuss group interaction, elements that affected it, and characteristics of students' interaction patterns. Changes over time will also be examined.

General Description of Group Interaction

Cha-Yang was assigned as the group leader who decided the order of the speakers. Little time was wasted on procedural issues. As a ritual, each member's turn started with the leader assigning the responder and ended with the receiver making statements such as "thank you," or the leader eliciting more comments. The students took turns reading their critique sheets. After the reading of a comment or all the comments on a critique sheet, the students usually talked about what they just heard. Session 2 was an exception in which none of the students wrote their critique sheets at home, since they did not exchange drafts before the session. The students were given time to read the drafts once and then talk about them in a spontaneous manner.

Table 13 shows the amount of time and speech that transpired during the discussions. The conversations were divided into episodes and turns. A turn is the speech uttered by a student before she is interrupted by another speaker.
Table 13

Time and Speech at Peer Response Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time (in minutes)</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Episodes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Turns</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The amount of time the students spent discussing drafts generally increased over time. Session 4 took the least time, perhaps the result of the initial use of critique sheets. This will be discussed in a later section. Session 7 took longer than the rest, because that assignment was larger and the students were allowed more time. It is reasonable to assume that the general trend of increase in speech was a result of the students’ growing familiarity with the responding task and the increasing use of Chinese. The effect of their use of Chinese will be discussed later.

The conversations recorded on the tapes showed that the students hardly ever drifted off task to talk about matters unrelated to writing. In the five sessions, only four episodes, most of which were short, were not related to the discussion of texts. However, they were still related to the responding task, the assignment requirements, or the subject matter of the writing. There was very little sharing of personal feelings or experiences related to the
topics of writing. The small number of such instances could be the result of the researcher’s practice of letting the students take charge of the recording. Sho-Li told the researcher that when the recorder was shut off, they either continued to talk about their writing or chatted about school or personal lives (Revision 9). According to the researcher’s observation, most of the group time was spent discussing texts and writing critique sheets. Talk about other things was probably very short. In this sense, the students in this study were very much like Nelson and Murphy’s ESL university students (1992), who stayed on task most of the time.

The atmosphere in Sessions 4 and 7 was serious, but in the other sessions there was more and more teasing and laughing over time. This was shown in the number of bursts of laughter that involved two or more members in the five sessions: 8, 2, 19, 6, and 28 respectively. The things they laughed at or teased one another about were mostly language mistakes in writing or speaking, their confusion about certain facts used in their writing, matters concerning sex, or predictions of what the others would say.

The students seemed to understand each other’s English very well, even though their speech was often laden with errors. Cha-Yang and Man-Hua had a higher proficiency in their spoken English, and they often helped Sho-Li and An-Lin express their ideas. Cha-Yang and Man-Hua clarified
pronunciation, helped find words to express ideas, and
translated between English and Chinese to help the group
understand what was being said. The example below shows
Man-Hua helping Sho-Li find the word "ironic" to express the
latter's feeling about the movie Medicine Man.

s: I think the title is Medicine Man. But since he is
a human being, he can save the life of human. He have to to get the medicine from nature.
So he can't cure human being by himself. It's a-
I think it's very (fon-tsu) [Chinese word for
"ironic"].

m: Ironic.

On the other hand, Sho-Li and An-Lin had weaker speaking
ability and never provided the same kind of assistance Cha-
Yang and Man-Hua gave them, with the exception of one
instance in which An-Lin did. In all the sessions, all four
students quite frequently helped one another complete a
sentence when halting speech was detected. They seemed to
be very understanding of the difficulty of speaking a
foreign language and therefore tried to be supportive of one
another.

Effects of Critique Sheets on Group Interaction

In the following discussion of group participation, the
episodes were divided into four categories in terms of the
number of participants involved: monologue, dyad, three-
interactant exchange, and whole-group exchange.
Participation is defined as joining discussion about texts.
The following elements were excluded because they contain no
substantial discussion about writing. These are as follows.
1. Short responses used to acknowledge the other speaker's speech (e.g., "Yes" and "OK").

2. False starts where the main meaning of the intended sentences was not clearly expressed.

3. Utterances that echo the other speaker's speech in the form of repeating some of the speaker's words, or utterances to help the other speaker complete her thoughts by filling in a few words.

4. Translations of words between English and Chinese or utterances requesting the responder to explain the meaning of some English words.

Table 14 shows the number of episodes that fall into the four types of participation. The percentage of episodes in which two or more members participated dropped sharply from Session 2 to Session 4. From Session 4 to Session 7, these episodes increased considerably. By session 9 the increase had leveled off.

Critique sheets initially seemed to restrain participation severely. In Session 2, with no critique sheets in their hands, the students talked in a less structured format. One person would bring up an issue and others would chime in to discuss it. Session 4 was the first time critique sheets were used. At this session the students just took turns reading their critique sheets, and very little discussion ensued. They seemed to be bound by the format set up by the critique sheets. When the
Table 14

Numbers of Episodes of Four Types of Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monologue</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0%)</td>
<td>(93%)</td>
<td>(59%)</td>
<td>(43%)</td>
<td>(42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyad</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(60%)</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
<td>(21%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td>(21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three interactant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(20%)</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
<td>(21%)</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(20%)</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
<td>(15%)</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(101%)</td>
<td>(101%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(101%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researcher asked them why this was so, Man-Hua said the other three members were probably exhausted by the Chinese class they had before the peer response session, but the other three students denied that and said they could not think of any reason. The researcher believed that the critique sheets did restrain the interaction at this stage, when the students were still unskilled in responding. By Sessions 6, 7 and 9, the students had become more familiar with the task, and the critique sheets seemed to have less of an effect. At these sessions the discussion was longer.
and more free-flowing and more students participated. The format set by the critique sheets was still apparent since the students still took turns reading the critique sheets, but after the reading they would continue to discuss issues of interest.

Another effect of the critique sheets was that they seemed to ensure that every member had her turn speaking. When the critique sheets were not completed before the sessions, some students would miss their turns to talk. This occurred to Sho-Li and An-Lin in Sessions 2 and Man-Hua in Session 9. Whenever the before-session critique sheets were prepared, nothing like this would happen.

Most of the students felt the requirement of writing critique sheets also made them read the drafts before the sessions. Sho-Li even said it made her read more carefully (Log 8). Having the critique sheets in their hands while responding also made An-Lin and Sho-Li less nervous (Log 8). The critique sheets reminded Cha-Yang and Sho-Li what to say. An-Lin also felt the act of writing down comments forced her to organize her thoughts well before presenting them.

**Effects of First Language Use on Group Interaction**

The students used Chinese to facilitate their communication occasionally. They inserted Chinese words or phrases in their English when they could not find the English equivalents or when they helped others comprehend
the conversation by translating their own or their peers' English into Chinese. Sometimes some high-frequency words such as "{duei}," (="yes") or "{bu-shi}," (="no") just blurted out inadvertently. Complete Chinese sentences were mostly used to restate what they said in English to ensure comprehension or to discuss problems that were harder to discuss, such as logic.

All but three episodes started with English. The group usually lapsed into Chinese when one member started using it, perhaps because the students were uncomfortable about maintaining the conversation in English when one of them was using Chinese. Once started, the use of Chinese would continue until the end of the episode. When a new episode began, the group almost always switched back to English, as if realizing that they had just done something they should not have. Sho-Li initiated the use of Chinese most.

For every student the use of Chinese showed a steady increase. In Sessions 2 and 4 the use constituted only a small part of the conversation. By the second semester, it increased dramatically. The number of Chinese words used by each student in Sessions 2, 4, and 9 will be presented to show the increases. For Cha-Yang, the numbers were 0, 13, and 78; for Man-Hua, 3, 64, and 172; for An-Lin, 3, 36, 462; and for Sho-Li, 25, 12, and 821. For the group in general the increase may have to do with the instructor's lenient attitudes towards L1 use.
The researcher suspected that L1 use encouraged participation in discussion, and for each student the degree of the effects varied. In Sho-Li’s case, she did not feel like speaking if she had to speak in English (Reaction 2). She felt that the use of Chinese made the atmosphere more lively and the communication more effective. The researcher felt that the use of L1 apparently promoted her participation dramatically. In the first semester Sho-Li was very quiet. She said,

I am the quietest girl in my group when we have to do peer response. . . . Sometimes I want to say something but I can not express myself well in English, so I often keep quiet. At this time, I feel that I am like the little mermaid, who wants to talk but has no voice (Log 6).

However, in the second semester, the researcher noticed that Sho-Li’s nervousness subsided to a large extent. She listened intently, jumped into the discussion in many instances, and laughed heartily occasionally, without feeling self-conscious.

The increase in her participation was indicated by the changes in the percentage of turns she took out of the total number of turns the whole group took in each session. The researcher did not want to use the amount of speech she made as an indicator because all students increased their speech over time. Sho-Li’s dramatic increase in participation is evident in the following data, which shows the percentage of turns she took in each of the five sessions (Sho-Li’s turns and the total number of turns are given in parentheses):
13% (20/155), 19% (14/75), 25% (47/187), 25% (67/273), and 26% (86/336). This increase corresponds well with her increase in L1 use, indicating that L1 use apparently had encouraged her to speak up. She herself also told the researcher that the greatest cause of her increase in participation was her use of Chinese (Post-study interview).

An-Lin, whose proficiency in spoken English was better than Sho-Li's, never mentioned the agony of having to speak English. However, she sensed some difference caused by the choice of language. She said,

When we use Chinese, the atmosphere will become not so seriously. It's also easier to communicate in Chinese, and sometimes we would become more active. Because using English in peer response seemed to be serious, so we talk less in English (Questionnaire).

She also felt it took them longer to understand one another when using English, and thus she appreciated being allowed to switch between languages (Log 9).

Her use of L1 showed a great increase, as did her total amount of speech. However, there was no clearly increasing trend in the percentage of turns she took per session: 23% (36/155), 19% (14/75), 19% (36/187), 9% (25/273), and 23% (76/336). The link between L1 use and her attempts to take the floor was not as obvious as in Sho-Li's case, even though the use of Chinese may still have made her speak up more. The way her speaking turns were distributed in each of the five sessions showed that she seemed to speak up more when she could relate to the subject matter of the writing.
For example, she was almost completely silent when the group talked about Man-Hua's research paper, which intimidated her. She also talked more when the group discussed her writing than when they discussed someone else's.

In Cha-Yang's case, her spoken English was the best in the group and she was ambivalent about the use of L1. She said,

I think using English for peer response is better because our writing is in English. It is more easy to understand, we don't have to translate the response into English. But I think using Chinese to talk, I feel more comfortable. Atmosphere will be better, it is more easy to communicate (Questionnaire).

Cha-Yang's L1 use also increased over time although the increase was minor. It did not seem to have caused her to increase the number of times she took the floor as dramatically as it had in Sho-Li's case, even though in general her speech still increased over time. The percentage of turns she took in each of the sessions fluctuated, as shown in the following: 29% (45/155), 37% (28/75), 26% (49/187), 38% (104/273), and 28% (95/336). The distribution of her speaking turns showed that she participated more when the group was discussing her texts, or when the group was quiet and, as group leader, she had to talk.

To Man-Hua, the use of L1 and L2 offered different advantages: using Chinese in peer response made the atmosphere more lively and the participation better, but using English made the group more attentive to the
Man-Hua had confidence in her spoken English and wanted to use it as much as possible. She said, "Most of the time, I do not think that language is a barrier to me . . . Actually I love to speak in English. Because this is the best chance to practice my English" (Log 9). She felt forced to use Chinese when the others did so, but she was reluctant to do so (Log 9).

Man-Hua's L1 use increased steadily over time, as did the total amount of her speech. However, this increasing trend was not reflected in the percentage of turns she took in each of the sessions, which was 35% (54/155), 25% (19/75), 29% (55/187), 28% (77/273), and 24% (79/336) respectively. Thus her use of first language did not seem to cause an increase in her speech as dramatically as it did in Sho-Li's case, even though the link may still be there. Her distribution of speaking turns showed that her participation may be more strongly associated with how much she knew about the writing problems being discussed.

The extent of the use of first language and its effects on participation differed with each student. Each student also had a different attitude toward it. This is one of the factors that complicates the dynamics of an L2 group.

**Students' Individual Participation Patterns**

The students' individual participation patterns will be discussed in terms of the role they played: both as
receivers of comments and as responders. The episodes in which the students spoke were categorized as follows.

1. **Episodes of acknowledgement or no response.** The writer makes only statements signalling to the responder that she is listening (e.g., "yes", "I see," or echoing of words of the responder) or remains silent.

2. **Episodes of acceptance or rejection.** The writer shows appreciation for the responder’s suggestion (e.g., "That’s a good idea"), willingness to incorporate the suggestion (e.g., "I’ll add in the second draft"), or rejection (e.g., "I don’t understand").

3. **Episodes of clarification.** The writer makes statements or asks questions to clarify or confirm the responder’s meaning, sometimes by restating what the responder says or requesting elaboration (e.g., "Can you give me some example?").

4. **Episodes of discussion of subject matter of writing.** The writer talks about the subject of the writing, usually in response to a responder’s suggestion of an idea that could be added to the content (e.g., Cha-Yang’s talk about the symbolism in her film review). In such episodes, the writer does not talk about writing problems.

5. **Episodes of explanation.** The writer mainly explained her writing by agreeing or disagreeing with the responder through stating the purpose (or plans) of her writing. Or she might explain her writing process or the
nature of the writing. For example, Sho-Li suggested that Man-Hua write about the suicide event in the movie in the film review she wrote. Man-Hua said, "I skip that that plot because I think I don't have much time to-" Another example is Cha-Yang's response to An-Lin's suggestion that her film review could include a discussion of David Lynch's use of symbolism in all his movies. Cha-Yang rejected the suggestion by saying "I am not talking about David Lynch's films. I am talking about Blue Velvet." Sometimes the writer may also make statements of clarification or acknowledgement in the communication process. Since the researcher's purpose was to see if the writer was able to explain her writing, the clarification and acknowledging statements embedded in these episodes were not considered important.

6. Episodes in which the writer brings up writing problems. The writer brings up a writing problem that troubles her or proposes revision to seek feedback from her peers.

In addition to the above, when analyzing the above episodes the researcher focused on the following two dimensions.

1. Defensiveness --> Receptiveness. Some learners may be too defensive about their texts to listen carefully to what their peers say to understand the messages behind the comments or to participate in a productive manner to
gain fuller understanding of the nature of their writing problems. On the other hand, some students might be too receptive of their peers' opinions and too timid to explain what their intentions or plans for the writing were, thus losing the opportunities to clarify the nature of their writing problems.

2. **Passiveness <-> Assertiveness.** Some learners are capable of taking over their learning by bringing up writing problems they need help with, or by proposing revision to seek feedback from others. On the other hand, others might be passively waiting for their peers to comment, thus giving up control of what kind of feedback they get.

In analyzing the responders' speech, two aspects of their performance will be discussed: their performance in self-initiated episodes, and their performance in peer-initiated episodes. In order to show how much discussion ensued, the number of turns the responders took will be presented. Episodes that involve only praise are excluded because they mostly consist of one turn (since the students always treated them as routine rituals and almost never reacted to them), and their inclusion would skew the picture of the extent of the discussion.

**An-Lin as a Receiver**

The episodes An-Lin were involved in as a receiver are classified in Table 15. She seemed to keep her speech to a minimum. The first type of episode constituted 63% of her
Table 15
An-Lin as a Receiver: Numbers and Types of Episodes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response,</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter talk</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Proposing problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

episodes. Her two acceptance statements and most of her clarification statements consisted of only a few words (e.g., "I’ll write it down", "Really?"). When she discussed the subject matters of her writing, the length of the episodes ranged from one to four very short turns. As to her statements of explanation, her nine episodes consisted of an average of 3.8 turns, most of which were very short.

The large number of the first two kinds of episodes showed that she had little tendency to question the validity of her peers' comments, especially in the first semester. The nature of the four clarification statements showed that
she was just confirming what her peers wanted her to do, instead of clarifying the nature of her problems or discussing the effects of the revision suggested by her peers. For example, she asked Cha-Yang what she should do about organization: "The organization should be-" In the three episodes in which she talked about the subject matter of her writing, her peers asked her about her feelings about the movie she reviewed in an attempt to help her find ideas to write about. She just answered the questions with no questions or objections.

She did explain her writing in 9 episodes. However, most of the time her attempts to explain or defend her writing were very timid. This was especially true in sessions 6 and 7. Such timidness sometimes prevented her from engaging in a discussion long enough to find out about the nature of her writing problems. For example, in her research paper about modern women, she had a paragraph that said women ignore their emotional needs because they have to devote themselves to their careers in order to survive the competition on the job. In her conclusion she said women still have their emotional needs which would be fulfilled by their Mr. Rights. What she really intended to say was that even though women are forced to ignore their emotional needs, they still want men to meet their emotional needs. However, she failed to connect these two ideas very well and Sho-Li pointed out the contradiction.
s: But there are some ideas make me confuse... Because your body, you say modern women always devote themselves into work too much and they ignore their need of emotions, just notice [care about] what what- and I think they are not the same as-

a: Modern women.

s: Yes... They are not the same as your conclusion. In your conclusion, "today’s new women, who are like men, have their emotion and character. They want someone give them flower, they want some men to rely on." So I think- {It's not consistent.}

a: But I think they maybe devoted themselves into work too much, but they hope someone to care about them. That's they hope.

s: {I know.} What do you think? [Sho-Li directs the question to another student. An-Lin remains quiet till the end of this episode.]

After the session she told the researcher that she did not sense the contradiction and did not know why Sho-Li did. The researcher felt that if An-Lin had challenged Sho-Li further, she might have realized the problem.

Such timidness seemed to have finally decreased in Session 9. In this session, she was able to explain her writing in four episodes. She even openly rejected two suggestions and expressed her reasons in more details than in previous sessions. For example, Sho-Li said that An-Lin’s paragraphs in her argumentation paper were unconnected. An-Lin explained her organization. Then when Sho-Li suggested writing a summary in the introduction to make the organization clearer, An-Lin rejected it (even
though she later accepted it). An-Lin's reaction is shown as follows.

s: {It would be better if the points you mention have some kind of order. So the flow will be better. Like first you discuss the financial aspect, then perhaps you have one or two points. Then social education aspect, two or three points. It is best this way. Or- then you say the babies are not well taken care of. Your ideas are jumping around.}

a: I think I {follow a certain order.} Because at first I think- the first reason I think- Baby sitter and day care center. {Then I say the environment there is not good. Then the con argument is- I say some people might want to find a good baby sitter. But then it would cost more money. Then I talk about financial problems. After the financial consideration, some people might think the babies could learn something from the baby sitters. So I talk about the daily lives- the kids may learn some bad habits or- Then I say educational problems, this paragraph, learning. Then the last paragraph is not related to the previous ideas, about women.}

c: I think maybe you can summarize your main point in the first paragraph.

all: Uh huh.

a: {But I was thinking-} Maybe it is strange for an argument paper, this genre. This is a debate.

The decrease in An-Lin's passiveness was small but steady, as indicated by the numbers of episodes in which she explained her writing. The turns she took to do so also became longer over time.

In general, An-Lin was still very slow in taking over her own learning. In all the sessions she never once brought up writing problems herself or proposed revision to seek feedback. She just waited passively for her peers to give her suggestions. In the five sessions there were two
instances in which she did not understand the comments but remained quiet. In five instances she was unsure about or disagreed with some comments but failed to challenge the responders. In two of these five instances, she only asked clarification questions to find out how the responder wanted her to revise. Only in Session 9 did she start to disagree with her peers in two instances.

**An-Lin as a Responder**

Table 16 shows the number of self- and peer-initiated episodes An-Lin was engaged in, the total number of both kinds of episodes, and the average number of turns she took per episode. The researcher also focused on how individual characteristics such as defensiveness/receptiveness or passiveness/assertiveness affected interaction.

There was a steady increase in the numbers of self-initiated and peer-initiated episodes. An-Lin’s participation was very limited in Session 2. In Session 4, when the critique sheets were first used and the speaking turns were assigned by the leader, she initiated 9 episodes dutifully at her turn and did not participate in any episodes initiated by her peers, seemingly too passive to say any more than she had to. Her episodes in this session were extremely short, with no attempt to elaborate, as she occasionally did in Session 2. By Session 6, she started to join peer-initiated discussion again by chiming in on two episodes. By Session 9, her episodes dramatically increased.
Table 16
An-Lin as a Responder: Numbers of Episodes & Average Number of Turns Per Episode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of episodes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-initiated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-initiated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-initiated</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-initiated</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and her turns also lengthened. She seemed to feel freer to speak up as the time went by.

An-Lin's performance in self-initiated episodes showed that she was shy about responding. When the writer disagreed with her, she tended to shut up and move on to the next comment or let the other responder(s) talk. This occurred in a total of five episodes in Sessions 2, 7 and 9. Under such circumstances, occasionally she would make a concession statement such as "It's up to you," as if excusing the author from incorporating her bad suggestion. She never tried to defend her opinions. An example is her reaction to Cha-Yang's response when she suggested that Cha-Yang explain what dangerous sex is in her paper on
unprotected sex. Cha-Yang’s reply did not address the comment directly, but An-Lin did not question her about why dangerous sex was not explained.

a: Your topic is dangerous sex, but it seems you didn’t tell us what and how dangerous sex is. You just say safety sex.

c: Yes, originally I write safe sex, but it seems very funny because I am not talking about safe sex. I am talking about dangerous sex. [An-Lin moves on to the next comment.]

Since most of her turns were brief, sometimes she did not say enough to avoid misunderstanding. For example, to Cha-Yang’s argumentation paper about prostitution, she wanted to suggest adding a discussion of the psychological aspects of the issue, and Cha-Yang mistakenly thought An-Lin wanted her to use emotional appeal in her argumentation. The misunderstanding was only revealed when they were both interviewed by the researcher afterwards. Cha-Yang and An-Lin’s conversation is shown below.

a: I think sometimes we say {the legalization of prostitution}- Sometimes maybe you can talk about psychological- It’s related.

c: [In an excited voice] You know the emotional- Yes, I want to talk about it, but I can’t think of any.

a: That’s just a suggestion. [An-Lin moves on to the next comment.]

Sometimes she detected problems but was too timid to bring them up. For example, she felt Man-Hua’s example of what she meant by a hero in her definition paper actually contradicted the definition (which the researcher agreed), but she kept silent.
However, she made a small breakthrough by openly disagreeing with another responder in Session 6. She did this twice in Session 6 and once in Session 9. In Session 6 the group discussed Cha-Yang’s definition paper, in which she based her definition of self defense on two child abuse cases. Man-Hua thought the last paragraph about solutions to child abuse problems was good, but An-Lin believed it was a deviation from the topic (as did the researcher). An-Lin expressed her disagreement openly. However, she stopped after one sentence, still not assertive enough to challenge further, as shown in the following.

C: Do you think the last paragraph I switch- somehow switch from self defense to talk about child abuse. Is it a little bit far away from the original topic?

A: At first I read this article, I have the same thinking. I think you are far away.

M: But actually the two cases are also about child abuse. So I think they can be connected together, because-

A: But excuse me, the topic is self defense. [An-Lin wanted to say more but was cut off by Cha-Yang and then later just dropped the issue.]

As for An-Lin’s participation in peer-initiated discussions, the number and length of her episodes showed slight increases. The only exception was Session 4, when the group’s interaction was restrained by the initial use of critique sheets. In 9 of the 12 peer-initiated episodes, she discussed writing. She echoed other responders’ opinions by elaborating on them or making suggestions for
revisions based on them in five instances. She disagreed with others or presented her own opinions in four instances. In the three episodes in which she did not discuss writing, she talked about her difficulty in critiquing the text in question, and helped her peers find words to express their ideas. As for the changes in her performance, she appeared to be more assertive over time. In Session 2 she only echoed other responders' opinions, but in Sessions 6 and 8 she was able to produce her own opinions or even to disagree with others. In general, An-Lin talked much less when the others responders initiated discussions than when she was assigned to critique, especially in the first semester. This was perhaps another indication of her timidness in interaction.

An-Lin was the most passive member of the group, both as a receiver of comments and as a responder. However, she become somewhat more assertive over time, even though at a slower rate than the others.

**Sho-Li as a Receiver**

Table 17 shows Sho-Li's interaction as a receiver. Sho-Li spoke little in the first semester. She either made no response, or only statements of acknowledgement or acceptance in 13 of the 15 episodes in Sessions 2 and 4. She seemed very shy about showing confusion or doubts about her peers' opinions. The only episode in which she made a short clarification statement was actually only her attempt
Table 17
Sho-Li as a Receiver: Numbers & Types of Episodes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Explanation</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

to confirm what the responder wanted her to do and there was little negotiation. The following excerpt from Session 2 is a typical example of her passiveness.

c: Does the film make you like the nature?

s: Mmm.

m: I think the importance of nature-

s: Yes?

m: When you pick up some important themes themes from the the movie and make your critique become more (persuasive). [Man-Hua laughs]

c: Convincible.

a: Persuasive. [Man-Hua laughs]
s: You mean in my article I have to refer some important- [confirming her understanding]

m: Because I think-

c: Does the film shows you beautiful scenery in nature?

s: Yes? You mean that I have to write down this- [confirming her understanding]

m: You can try to pick up some-

c: You describe the scene.

s: OK.

There was one episode in which she talked about the movie she critiqued. Her talk was a reply to a responder who suggested an idea that could be added. Sho-Li just provided the information requested without questioning. In this semester, she did not make any attempts to explain her writing at all. According to Sho-Li, her silence was a result of an inability to express herself freely in English, a lack of confidence in her writing, and the need to have more time to think about the comments (Revision 5).

In the second semester, her speech greatly increased. There were a total of ten episodes of explanation, which was a significant change. The number of such episodes increased from Session 6 to Session 9. She took an average of 3.5 turns to explain. For example, Cha-Yang and Man-Hua said that Sho-Li’s introduction in her research paper was too long, and in the process of clarifying and disagreeing with her peers she was able to understand her problem.
Eventually she revised accordingly and improved her introduction. This example is shown as follows.

c: I think the introduction paragraph is a little bit too long. Maybe you can separate the story and—You can separate it into two paragraphs.

s: Into two paragraphs?

c: But—The story is one paragraph and then— I just think—

s: But because I put an example in introduction and I want to show you what I want to talk in— later, {what is after} second. {pause} So my introduction is quite long. {pause} I don’t know what shall I do. {If you put the example in the first paragraph, and what you want to say in the second, wouldn’t that be strange?}

m: Because when I see the first paragraph, I don’t think it’s just an introduction. You have already go further to—how to say—

s: To the content.

m: Yeah.

s: I am not sure if I should give the reader some ideas that what I want to talk about later in the introduction. So—

c: I would suggest that you start another paragraph from "Not only parents—"

However, occasionally she still was not assertive enough to engage in a discussion long enough to find out what was wrong with the writing. For example, in her argumentation paper about whether people should live together before they get married, she said if two people were mature enough to decide what they want to do, then their decision to live together would not contravene social
mores. Cha-Yang pointed out that maturity had nothing to do with morality. Sho-Li tried to explain her theory.

\[c\]: Another thing is in the second page. . . . "In other words, you should be mature enough to choose life. Then you are allowed to cohabit. In that case cohabitation won’t damage the social moral. It’s better than divorce." I think the maturity of a person doesn’t have any relation with social moral.

\[s\]: {No.} Oh social moral-

\[c\]: A person can be mature, he can also be very-

\[t\]: Immoral?

\[c\]: Yes.

\[s\]: What I mean is that {they can be responsible for their behavior. They don’t need to- They can decide whether they want to follow the moral rules set by the society}. Here I would use another method to write about it. [ready to conform, end of episode]

At revision Sho-Li did not revise accordingly because she did not think there was anything wrong with her argument. During the peer response session, her acceptance of Cha-Yang’s suggestion terminated the back-and-forth discussion that could have helped her identify the problem. There were two similar instances in Sessions 7 and 9.

In general, Sho-Li remained somewhat passive in her learning. Throughout the course, she had never brought up a writing problem herself or proposed revision to get feedback. From reaction interviews the researcher learned that she failed to ask questions when she had doubts about her peers’ comments. In Sessions 4 and 6 there were three such instances, and she remained silent in all of them. In
session 7 and 9, there were 11 such cases and in 7 of them she also kept silent. However, there was some improvement since she did speak up in the other four cases.

**Sho-Li as a Responder**

Table 18 shows Sho-Li's participation as a responder.

**Table 18**

**Sho-Li as a Responder: Numbers of Episodes & Average Number of Turns Per Episode**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total no. of episodes</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-initiated</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-initiated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average no. of turns per episode</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-initiated</td>
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<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer-initiated</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers of her self- and peer-initiated episodes show a general increasing trend. In Session 2 she was very scared to voice her opinions. Her participation increased considerably in Session 4, perhaps because critiquing turns were assigned by the leader. From the first to the second semester, both types of episodes increased dramatically in number and length. The numbers of turns in her self-
initiated episodes steadily increased and became the highest in the group.

In Sho-Li's self-initiated episodes, in the first semester she was extremely timid about contradicting her peers. She did so only once and spoke only two sentences and then stopped when another person started to disagree with her. However, over time she became more confident, and by Sessions 7 and 9 she could actually bring herself to openly disagree with others. She had achieved dramatic growth as a responder. For example, in Session 7 she pointed out that Cha-Yang mixed two ideas in one paragraph (the safety of condoms and the consequence of installing condom vending machines on campus), which confused the reader about what the main idea was. Man-Hua believed the problem lay in Cha-Yang's failure to use expressions such as "I agree" to make the reader aware that the writer was expressing her opinion. Sho-Li disagreed with Man-Hua in a straightforward manner and continued to say what she thought the real problem was. Finally she convinced Man-Hua and Cha-Yang. The following excerpt shows her new assertiveness.

s: Yeah, {it's funny, you mixed them together.}

m: Because there is nowhere you say "I agree." No, how to say- definitely point out your idea. For me, I can see your point, but for Sho-Li- [del txt]

c: Do I have to say "I agree" or "I do not agree"?
s: No, it's not necessary. But since you just mention there is a heat argument {whether to sell condom on campus}- After this, you just tell us that condom is not very safe- safely. {You just said that it is not safe. But in the middle you didn't talk about how condoms promote casual sex on campus.} You just say we cannot allow campus to-

m: Maybe you can say "because the machine will promote-"

c: I also think that there is some problem with this paragraph.

s: {Yes, it is strange.}

m: Some ideas mixed.

In Sho-Li's peer-initiated episodes, her speech increased dramatically from the first to the second semester, just as in her self-initiated ones. In the two sessions in the first semester, she participated in three episodes and said only five short sentences. In the second semester the number of episodes increased to eleven. Of the total of 14 episodes, she discussed writing in ten. When she discussed text, she often expressed her own opinion or disagreed with others'. Occasionally she echoed others' opinions or helped other speakers clarify their meaning. In two of the other four episodes in which she did not discuss writing, she expressed her difficulty in critiquing texts. Unlike the other three members in her group, whose spoken English was better than hers, she was never able to help the others express themselves in English. In general, most of her peer-initiated episodes were shorter than Cha-Yang's and
Man-Hua's, suggesting that she still had a lesser tendency to speak when it was not her turn to critique.

Sho-Li often incorporated Chinese when she carried on an extended discussion. Li use appeared to play an important role in her interaction. She started out as a timid receiver of comments and responder, and she became more assertive in the second semester.

**Cha-Yang as a Receiver**

Cha-Yang's interaction as a receiver is shown in Table 19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cha-Yang as a Receiver: Numbers &amp; Types of Episodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response, Acknowledgement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
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<td>Subject matter talk</td>
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<td>Explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposing problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cha-Yang made no response or only statements of acknowledgement to 63% of the comments she received in the
five sessions. There were almost no clarification or acceptance episodes. The two episodes in which she talked about the topics of her writing were very short. She explained her writing in 11 episodes. When she explained her writing, she took an average of 6.5 turns, the highest number in the group.

As early as Session 2, Cha-Yang already felt free about disagreeing with her peers' comments and explaining her plans for writing, even though she did this only once in this session. Her speech was straightforward and determined. She made many more explanations in the second semester. When she explained her writing, most of the time she would engage in it long enough to understand why her peers thought there was a problem. Sometimes she was able to make them see the reason behind her writing. At other times through back-and-forth discussion she was able to understand the nature of her problems or come across unexpected valuable information. For example, in her argumentation paper about the legalization of prostitution in Taiwan, Sho-Li questioned the relevance of the pro and con arguments concerning taxes for brothels. Through the discussion Cha-Yang found out that prostitution is still illegal in Taiwan and then decided to revise a section of her paper. Even though sometimes her peers' comments did not seem valid to her, she never argued in a defensive manner or showed contempt for her peers. Her conversation
showed her attitudes to be sincere and reasonable. For example, Man-Hua felt that the text Cha-Yang quoted in her research paper (concerning young girls' ignorance about the danger of unprotected sex) was not striking enough to warrant quoting. Cha-Yang disagreed in a polite manner. Her interaction follows.

m: I found some quotation is not so striking. For example, "Girls simply believe their boyfriend even [when] they are screwing around, they think nothing will happen. They say they would never do anything . . . ." I don't think it's very striking, because every word in this sentence is very simple, and the idea is also very simple.

c: Uh, I don't know [being tactful].

m: "If this girl looks clean, I will not use a condom. I decide . . . ." Because for me, some quotation you cite from the book, it's not striking.

c: Not the word, but the idea is very interesting, because it depends on the girls' appearance.

m: I understand-

c: I am not quoting some striking words, but the whole idea.

As to her control of her learning, in the five sessions Cha-Yang brought up a writing problem once. In Session 6 she asked her group whether the last paragraph in her definition paper was a deviation from the topic. The group had a long discussion, which Cha-Yang felt was very helpful. Occasionally Cha-Yang kept silent when she was not sure of or disagreed with what her peers said. This occurred a total of three times in Sessions 4 and 6. According to Cha-Yang herself, her silence was not caused by her fear of
disagreeing with others, but her inability to make on-the-spot decision about whether a suggestion was good or bad, since she had to try it out before she knew (Reaction 4). However, such hesitation did not occur any more in Sessions 7 and 9. Cha-Yang seemed to feel even freer to speak up over time, and was much less inhibited than An-Lin and Shou-Li.

Cha-Yang as a Responder

Table 20 shows Cha-Yang’s participation as a responder.

Table 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cha-Yang as a Responder: Numbers of Episodes &amp; Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Turns Per Episode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>#2 #4 #6 #7 #9 Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of episodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-initiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-initiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average no. of turns per episode</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-initiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-initiated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general both her self- and peer-initiated episodes showed a significant increasing trend from the first to the second semester. Cha-Yang made the largest number of comments in her group. As to the length of the self-
initiated episodes, her performance fluctuated, while the length of her peer-initiated ones increased steadily.

Cha-Yang's performance in self-initiated episodes showed that she spoke up freely and did not shy away when someone disagreed with her. If her comments were contradicted, she would usually attempt to clarify the speaker's meaning, or continue to explain what she meant, or move on to make a suggestion. Very often, if she could not convince the writer after making some efforts, she would elicit comments from another responder. In Sessions 2, 4, 7, and 9 there were a total of 12 such instances and in all of them Cha-Yang continued to respond after somebody disagreed with her. An example is her comment on Man-Hua's film review in Session 2.

c: Also in your critique you're focusing on plot, theme, and actors. I think there is quite too much for you to write three things in your paper. Why don't you just choose one or two you think is important to write, and then you write it in-detailedly.

m: Because I think- First I focus on the theme. I didn't make much emphasize on the plot. But I think those are connected tightly, because a good theme- a good theme is the spirit of the plot. And we have to have a excellent actor to make this movie become successful. So that's why I combine those three together. But you see I make more stress on theme.

[An-Lin agreed with Cha-Yang.]

c: But I don't think there is need for you to write the whole story- the whole plot.

[Sho-Li supported Man-Hua.]
m: Yeah, that’s why I write so much. Because I really appreciate this movie. So I just write as much as I can, my ideas about this movie. . . .

c: Yes. If you have so many things you want to point to, that will confuse the reader.

[Man-Hua responded. Cha-Yang went on to make a suggestion.]

Regarding Cha-Yang’s performance in discussion initiated by other responders, in the first semester she participated in only three short episodes. However, her participation increased greatly in the second semester, as indicated by larger numbers of episodes and longer speaking turns. In the five sessions, she discussed writing in 16 of the 22 episodes. She seemed to feel free about disagreeing with other responders and did so in six episodes. She also echoed other speakers by elaborating what they said or clarifying their meaning in 11 episodes. In the four episodes in which she did not discuss writing, she helped Sho-Li or An-Lin express themselves in English. (She and Man-Hua were the two main members that offered linguistic assistance.)

Cha-Yang’s participation both as a receiver and responder increased greatly over time. Since her entry-level performance was generally better than the others’, her improvement was not as dramatic as Sho-Li’s.

**Man-Hua as a Receiver**

Table 21 shows Man-Hua’s interaction as a receiver. The percentage of episodes in which she made no response
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response,</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance,</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter talk</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposing problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

or only statements of acknowledgement was the smallest in the group (54%). Her episodes of acceptance (N=1), rejection (N=1), and clarification involved very little speech. Most of her speech was devoted to explaining her writing. The number of episodes in which she did so was slightly higher than those of the others. In the 12 episodes in which she did so, she took an average of 4.1 turns in each and most of the turns were longer than those of her peers.

Sometimes Man-Hua behaved in a neutral manner but other times defensively. In Session 4 she was very disappointed
with the quality of the comments she received but hardly said anything. She told the researcher that she tried to be considerate with her peers by not complaining about their performance. In Sessions 6 and 9, she brought up a few writing problems she needed help with, indicating that she was still interested in getting feedback. In Session 9 she even joked with her group once. However, in Sessions 2 and 7 she explained her writing very often and acted defensively. The defensiveness also seemed to increase over time. In Session 2, even though she did not take criticism very well, she still tried to be tactful. However, in Session 7 she was frank about her feelings. Such a change may be a reflection of her rising disappointment and anger with the group. Her defensiveness appeared to emerge when three factors were combined: lack of praise for her writing, many questions about her writing, and criticism on writing about subject matters she claimed to know much about. Sessions 2 and 7 were the two sessions in which all three factors were present.

In Session 2 her group gave her two suggestions on her film review (Dead Poet’s Society) and she explained her writing after both. One of her explanations showed that she was offended and she defended herself with an argument that was irrelevant to the writing problem at hand. That is, to An-Lin’s suggestion not to retell the story in the movie in detail, she replied:
You know if I got plenty time, I would write more than ten pages. Because I just finish it in two hours. I have to . . . watch this videotape again because I forgot most of the plot. I watch it at one o'clock this morning. And I start writing until three o'clock. . . . Because I feel asleeping. So I just give up. So you see my conclusion is very ambiguous. I didn't write as much as I can. So if I got time, I would write more than ten pages, because I think this movie is very meaningful to us. . . .

In Session 7, she received one comment of praise but twelve others which suggested that she had problems with her research paper about Michelangelo's sculpture Moses. Man-Hua explained her writing in response to eight of them and some of her explanations sounded extremely defensive. For example, Cha-Yang suggested that she tell the reader the qualities in Moses that made her choose to discuss it. Before this suggestion, Man-Hua had already been upset by the problems her peers brought up and had also shown contempt for their lack of knowledge about the subject matter she so dearly loved. After hearing Cha-Yang's comment, she decided not to hide her anger and sense of intellectual superiority any more. To the group she said,

[In a slightly raised voice] Because I am too familiar with this [laughs] kind of the art, too familiar with Michelangelo, so I was thinking everyone also know. So I didn't mention about. There is something I need to tell you if you are the first time to see this person or to know this sculpture. There is a lot of things you have to know. I was just presume you already know. So I didn't want to say much about that. . . . If I say, three pages is too impossible for that. Each work, even uncompleted work, maybe just a {rough form of a figure}, it's also very symbolic. If you have read art work, every work of Michelangelo highly symbolic.
After the session, Man-Hua told the researcher that she felt offended that her peers did not appreciate her well-written paper (Exit interview). She believed that her peers did not even finish reading her draft (Revision 7). (In fact all her peers read her paper once and Cha-Yang actually made a few valid comments.)

Man-Hua's defensiveness often caused her to feel that she knew all her writing problems and that her peers could not suggest anything that she was not already aware of. This occurred in all the sessions. For example, An-Lin suggested that in a film review Man-Hua should not devote too much space to the retelling of the story in the movie. Man-Hua told the researcher her reaction to this comment after the session.

An-Lin said I should not devote so much space to the plot. . . . In fact I know I shouldn't. When I was writing my draft, I was pressed for time. . . . The ideas they gave me already occurred to me while I was writing. I know I have to fix the problems they mentioned. . . . So I don't think their comments are very helpful [laughs] (Reaction 2).

However, when the researcher interviewed her after the revision, she contradicted herself by denying that she devoted too much space to retelling the story. She said, "I didn't write the whole plot. Because they are too familiar with the movie, so when I write a little bit, they think I write the whole story." Apparently when she said she knew her problem, she was just acting defensively.
Her defensiveness might have prevented her from comprehending what her peers were saying and thus she failed to really understand what was wrong with her writing. In four episodes the researcher felt this was happening and her revision also showed that she did not react to the comments in question. In three episodes Man-Hua dismissed the suggestions by explaining her writing process or intentions and then went on to brag about the efforts she put into the assignment or show her familiarity with the subject matter, both of which were irrelevant to the problems in question. For example, Cha-Yang felt that Man-Hua’s conclusion was problematic because it gave a summary of the four qualities of Michelangelo’s art works but in the body of the paper only two or three were discussed. Cha-Yang also felt Man-Hua should concentrate on one or two and discuss them in depth. In response, Man-Hua stated the importance of including all four ideas and at the same time also let the group know how much she had read on her topic and how little she thought the group knew about the topic. She even talked about Michelangelo’s art in detail, which was unrelated to Cha-Yang’s question. With her mind preoccupied with defending herself, she had not given any thought to the mismatch between the body and the conclusion that Cha-Yang brought up. After the session Man-Hua told the researcher that she had not received any helpful comments at all. In her second draft the problem in question remained.
As to Man-Hua's control of her learning, she seemed to be more capable of bringing up writing problems than any others in her group. There were four such instances. An example is an episode in which she asked the group about the appropriateness of the title for her argumentation paper. Man-Hua tended to speak up when she failed to understand or disagreed with her peers. In Sessions 2, 4, and 6, she disagreed three times and each time she explained herself. In Session 7 even though she did not do so after every comment she disagreed with, she did defend herself in eight long episodes.

**Man-Hua as a Responder**

Table 22 shows Man-Hua's interaction as a responder.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>#9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total no. of episodes</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-initiated</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-initiated</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average no. of turns per episode</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-initiated</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-initiated</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The total number of episodes Man-Hua was involved in and the average number of turns she took fluctuated and did not show any clear trend of increase or decrease. When the self-initiated and peer-initiated episodes were considered separately, it could be seen that in the first three sessions the number of self-initiated episodes increased but dropped sharply in the last two sessions. This was probably because in Sessions 4 and 6 Man-Hua took some time to read the drafts outside of class and therefore had something to say, while in Sessions 7 and 9 she only skimmed through the drafts right before the discussion and therefore had few opinions.

Man-Hua’s performance in self-initiated episodes showed that she was an assertive responder. Whenever her comments were misunderstood or rejected, or when they conflicted with those of the other responders, she would defend her comments by clarifying herself or analyzing the writing problems further. She almost always had the last word. Even though once in a while she sounded slightly defensive, most of the time she seemed reasonable. An example is her response to the group’s discussion of An-Lin’s argumentation paper, in which each set of con and pro arguments were separated into two paragraphs. Sho-Li felt there were too many short paragraphs, but Cha-Yang disagreed. Man-Hua clarified both Sho-Li’s and her own opinions.
c: I don't agree with you because there is one method of organization. You put one con and then pro, con, pro. There is alternative.

m: I say I know. I say it's OK. I say the reason why she [Sho-Li] feels strange because she thinks there is a lot of paragraphs in this composition. Only two page. I didn't say it is not good. But for her, she say is too many- only two page, but she see maybe one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten.

The number of peer-initiated episodes she participated in increased steadily, with the exception of Session 4. This increase was probably her way of compensating for not saying very much in self-initiated episodes. Just as she did when she initiated discussion herself, she spoke freely when she participated in discussion initiated by other responders. Of a total of 30 episodes, she discussed writing in 25. Since most of the time she did not read the drafts carefully before the group discussion, she did not have many ideas ready to share with the group. She mostly interpreted or elaborated others' opinions by restating them or further analyzing the problems in question. Sometimes she was able to produce original opinions or suggestions this way, and in a few cases she was even able to disagree with others. Her frequent participation stimulated much discussions about some major problems. However, on a few occasions her comments showed that she had not read the drafts carefully. In nine episodes she helped her peers express themselves in English. In this group, she offered the most linguistic assistance.
Man-Hua's performance in general did not improve as much as that of the other three peers. Her occasional defensive attitude as a receiver actually hurt the atmosphere a little. However, her frequent participation in peer-initiated episodes did liven up the discussions.

**Summary**

Group interaction in peer response sessions seemed to be affected by several factors. The use of critique sheets initially seemed to hamper students' participation. Despite this, critique sheets had some advantages. Students felt that writing the critique sheets prepared them for the sessions and made them less nervous when presenting their opinions in the group.

The use of first language also had an effect on the students' participation in the group. For Sho-Li, who had a strong fear of speaking English, the increase in her use of Chinese seemed to cause her participation to increase dramatically. However, for the other students, who did not share her apprehension, it did not have such a distinct effect. Students also had different attitudes. For Sho-Li, permission to use Chinese was a great relief. An-Lin also appreciated being able to code-switch. Cha-Yang and Man-Hua actually preferred to use English.

Individual traits such as defensiveness/receptiveness or passiveness/assertiveness also played a very important role. As a receiver, An-Lin acted passively. She was
afraid to ask questions or bring up her own writing problems for discussion. However, she finally felt more comfortable about explaining her writing at the last session. As a responder, she was shy about her opinions. Her passiveness occasionally prevented her from communicating effectively. However, her participation increased in the second semester.

As a receiver, Sho-Li acted very passively in the first semester. Her participation increased dramatically in the second. She became more able to question the responder. As a responder, in the first semester, her participation was also very limited, but in the second it increased significantly. She became much more assertive, which often helped her communicate more clearly.

Man-Hua spoke freely and elicited feedback on problems she needed help with when she acted as a receiver. Occasionally her defensiveness prevented her from seeing the value of her peers' comments. As a responder, she stopped preparing for the group discussion after Session 6 and compensated by participating more when the others brought up issues for discussion. When someone disagreed with her, she tended to argue her point.

• As a receiver, Cha-Yang rarely felt shy about disagreeing with her peers, and her participation increased over time. She explained her writing clearly, which sometimes led her to discover her problems. As a responder,
she made more comments over time and tended to explain her opinions further when someone disagreed with her.

What contributes to successful student interaction at peer response sessions is a complicated matter. Elements such as critique sheets or first language may have certain effects at one stage but not at another, and the effect on one student may be different than on another. Student characteristics which play an important role in group interaction may make the outcome even more unpredictable.
Chapter 9
Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications

This chapter will discuss the major findings of this study, draw conclusions, and present implications for teaching and research. Student interaction will be discussed first to provide an overall picture of how the group worked.

**Student Interaction during Peer Response Sessions**

Several factors seemed to have affected the interaction of this group. The interaction seemed to be very formal, since they rarely drifted off task or spent time socializing. However, the formality might also be a research effect, since they were aware that they were being studied. Even though only Sho-Li admitted that the tape-recording made her nervous, it may also have affected the others.

Another factor was the use of critique sheets. The responding format they set up seemed to hamper group interaction initially. However, the researcher noticed that the critique sheets did not have the same effects on Group 4, the other group that the researcher closely observed. In Group 4, the critique sheets also prompted the students to read their comments, but after the reading the students often picked up comments of interest to discuss. There was much free-flowing discussion in which many members participated.
The researcher suspects that the difference between these two groups may be related to the students' confidence in their abilities to speak, write, and critique writing in English. On average the students in Group 4 were more confident than those in Group 2 (the case study group). Therefore the students in Group 4 all freely expressed their opinions after the comments on a critique sheet were read. On the other hand, Group 2 had two students, Sho-Li and An-Lin, who had little confidence in their skills. Sho-Li was even scared of speaking English. These two students probably wanted to keep their speech to a minimum. Their passive interaction might have affected the whole group, especially in Session 4.

These findings suggest that teachers who are considering using critique sheets faces a complex issue. Despite their initial disadvantages, critique sheets did offer advantages, such as preparing students for group discussions, as discussed in Chapter 8. Since student characteristics also play a role, teachers have to understand the students well to make a decision or simply experiment to find out how critique sheets work.

Elbow (1973) observed that critique sheets made students focus on technicalities, but Nystrand (1986) showed that they made students pay attention to higher-level issues. Both scholars noted this cognitive aspect of the issue, but few researchers have looked into how critique
sheets impact students' participation. More studies are needed.

The use of Chinese also affected group interaction. It seemed to have impacted individual students differently. To a great extent, it encouraged Sho-Li, the student who had a great apprehension for speaking English, to talk. Whether allowing students to use Chinese in an English writing class is appropriate is debatable. The use of Chinese caused different reactions. As Sho-Li reported, her fear of speaking English often forced her to remain quiet in the first semester. The use of Chinese in the second semester enhanced the quantity and quality of her interaction. Her experience with peer response became so positive at the end of the course that she showed great interest in having a peer response class again next year. Even though the use of Chinese took away some opportunities to speak English, the advantages gained outweighed the disadvantages. In An-Lin's case, the effects were less clear. Cha-Yang, whose spoken English was the best in the group, actually preferred to speak English. Research on code switching showed that bilinguals tend to code-switch to match the language of the listener (Poplack, 1981). However, this tendency was not strong in Cha-Yang. Her increase in the use of Chinese was the smallest in the group, and she was often able to maintain her speech in English while the others talked in Chinese. In fact she was the only one in the group that was
occasionally able to switch the conversation from Chinese into English. As a dutiful leader, she might have felt obligated to do so to lead the group into a condition most conducive to language learning. Her group’s use of Chinese did not seem to have negative effects on her. Man-Hua was the only one that showed a dislike for it. The group’s use of Chinese forced her to use Chinese, and thus curtailed her opportunities to practice English. Clearly the effect of the use of L1 was very different with each student.

In addition, the use of L1 seemed to have influenced each group to a different degree. Group 3, the group that used most Chinese, was also most dramatically affected. When Chinese was used, the group was lively, as suggested by constant teasing and laughing, dramatizing of voice, exaggeration of body language, and heated discussion in which the members competed to speak. When English was used, teasing, laughing, and dramatizing obviously diminished, but they persisted in a subdued manner, sometimes in whispers. The atmosphere became more business-like and group members also took turns talking, instead of speaking at the same time.

Again, teachers face a complex decision when they decide whether to allow first language use. They have to consider affective dimensions, such as how comfortable their students feel about speaking English and what they think of the group’s use of first language. They also have to
consider the cognitive demands the responding task makes on the students and the stage of development they are in. In the initial stage when students are overwhelmed with many tasks, the use of first language may help them achieve a level of success and help retain their interest. Sho-Li's case strongly argued for this. Teachers need to weigh the above factors against the kind of sociolinguistic environment and quality of discussion they desire in their groups. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no studies have been conducted on the effects of Ll use in peer response groups. More research is needed.

Student characteristics such as defensiveness/receptiveness or assertiveness/passiveness also played a very important role in group interaction. In general, An-Lin was an extremely passive interactant, with Sho-Li being in the middle, and Man-Hua and Cha-Yang being on the assertive side.

Cha-Yang, An-Lin, and Sho-Li improved as receivers and responders as the course progressed. However, the degree of growth and the time when improvement became obvious were very different with each student. Cha-Yang's entry level interaction skills were best, and she also made much improvement in the second semester. Sho-Li's entry level was perhaps the lowest in the group, but she started to make the most dramatic improvement in the beginning of the second semester. An-Lin's entry level was slightly better than
Sho-Li's. She also made considerable improvement in the second semester, particularly in the last session, even though her improvement was smaller than Cha-Yang's and Sho-Li's. For Man-Hua, whose entry level was close to Cha-Yang's, there was no obvious improvement. The above findings suggest that the students learned at different rates and for most students obvious improvement took at least one semester to become apparent. The back-and-forth negotiation of ideas that fosters critical thinking did not happen easily.

Students' interaction patterns are usually a reflection of their ability to speak, write, and critique, and personality is clearly also a factor. An-Lin's writing and critiquing abilities were at a basic level and she also had a timid personality. All these combined to prevent her from free participation. Since writing and critiquing abilities and personality can not be modified within a short period of time, interaction patterns may not be easily changed either. It is not surprising that An-Lin's growth did not become obvious until the end of the course. In Sho-Li's case, even though her writing and critiquing ability were better than An-Lin's and she was also less timid, she had a strong fear of speaking English, which may have seriously hindered her participation. When her use of Chinese increased greatly in the second semester, her participation improved dramatically. Cha-Yang's lack of inhibition in speaking up...
was probably a result of her better ability in speaking, writing and critiquing. She was also assertive enough to present her opinions freely and not get angry with criticism. Also driven by a sense of duty as the leader, she participated often, as she herself revealed (Log 4, Reaction 7). In Man-Hua's case, her lack of obvious improvement seemed to be more a result of her negative attitude toward peer response than her ability to speak, write, and critique, which was actually better than An-Lin's and Sho-Li's. Her defensive interaction as a receiver may be a reflection of her age, status, strong personality, and strong confidence in her abilities. Her declining performance as a responder was probably a result of disappointment with peer response.

The workings of an ESL peer response group are more complex than recognized. Writing teachers cannot assume that by instructing students in the procedures to follow and providing a list of questions to consider when responding, the students will work effectively as a group. Students' personalities and language proficiency as well as group dynamics have to be considered.

In general, most of the students became more involved in the responding activity over time, as has been reported in studies by Liner (1984), Coleman (1984), David (1986), Bencich (1989/1990), and Holley (1990/1991). The students seemed to feel comfortable about critiquing others' writing,
unlike those in studies by Flynn (1982), Benesch (1985/1986), and Spear (1988), who were unwilling to evaluate their peers' writing or to offer negative criticism. The only person in this study that felt angry about peer response was Man-Hua. She was like the college students in Tebo-Messina's study (1987/1988), who disliked peer response more over time, even though she was less openly antagonistic. Man-Hua appeared to resent being evaluated by peers whose ability she did not trust, as did students in studies by Ziv (1983) and Jacobs (1987, L2). To the researcher's knowledge, there has been little research that focuses on how certain individual traits, such as assertiveness/passiveness and defensiveness/receptiveness, affect students' interaction in peer response groups. More research in this area would be useful.

**Performance in Critiquing Writing**

All the students improved their performances in critiquing writing, although each to a different degree, with respect to both the strategies they use and the comments on their critique sheets.

**Strategies Used in Responding to Peers' Texts**

For all students, Helping was the most frequently used strategy when they responded to peers' texts if Mirroring is ruled out. (Mirroring is always used to accompany another strategy and does not have an independent function.) For all except An-Lin, Responding was the second, and Praising
third. In most cases, the Helping and Responding strategies did not obviously become more sophisticated until the second semester, showing that the ability to critique took much time to acquire.

The students’ belief that making suggestions was the most important thing in responding was manifested clearly in the beginning. In Session 2, all the students concentrated on making suggestions directly, without combining them with Mirroring or Responding. The researcher suspected that the students’ strong inclination to make suggestions might have stemmed from their experience with the responding styles of former writing teachers in their Chinese or English composition classes. Research has shown that traditional writing teachers maintain tighter control of their students by making suggestions (Perl & Wilson, 1986). The students might have learned to consider making suggestions as the most important task. This was suggested in Ziv’s (1983) study of L1 college freshmen, who would not consider their peers’ comments on content as helpful unless they included suggestions on how to revise.

As the course progressed, an obvious change in the Helping strategy was that all students tended to become more sophisticated in their suggestions by combining them with Mirroring or Responding. The second change was that they tended to feel less obligated to follow their discussion of problems with suggestions. The latter finding seemed in
disagreement with Ziv (1983), which showed that college students shifted from merely critiquing texts to combining their critique with suggestions. The above two changes may have been influenced by the researcher’s responding style. The researcher often avoided giving suggestions directly. She frequently responded by questioning, mirroring, or clearly spelling out problems.

A third change was that the suggestions of all students became more elaborate. They tended to give more detailed instructions for revision, or even to demonstrate revision by actually writing for the authors. Whether this tendency was conducive to learning or not can be viewed in several ways. The elaborated suggestions can be interpreted as positive signs that the students were getting more skillful at solving writing problems. However, scholars like Elbow (1973), who are proponents of reader-based responses and discourage making suggestions, and Graves (1984) and Atwell (1986), who prize democratic ways of responding, may consider what the students in this study did a form of appropriation of the authors' texts. On the other hand, more traditional writing teachers believe that making suggestions is a way to lead students into the academic writing community (Perl & Wilson, 1986).

The researcher tends to take a middle-of-the-road view of this. She believes that the linguistic context and cultural environment of the classroom have to be considered.
To the researcher's knowledge, there have not been any studies about what kind of responses are more effective for Chinese EFL writers. According to the researcher's understanding of writing instruction in Taiwan, in most writing classrooms the teachers wield greater power than those in a Western setting. Many teachers keep tight control of their students by making suggestions. As Harris and Silva (1993) pointed out, in certain cultures the teacher is expected to give solutions to writing problems. A teacher who acts only as a collaborator and lets students find their own answers may be considered incompetent. Therefore it is not surprising that students who come from such a background expect the teacher to provide suggestions for their writing. The researcher's understanding of her students (the ones in this study and those in the past) leads her to believe that many Chinese students expect suggestions. In fact, they are often confused about the functions of more indirect type of responses, such as questioning and mirroring. Kilborn (1992) pointed this out as a problem in communicating with ESL students who were used to directive statements. Among the students in this course, Man-Hua is a typical example. She was frustrated by Cha-Yang's questions about the way she wrote her research paper. Katie, a student the researcher observed closely but did not include in this study, is an even better example. She and Man-Hua were the two who had the most negative
experience with peer response in the researcher's class of 15. Her argumentation paper was extremely unclear and illogical, and she was questioned about it at length by her group. Katie took the questions to mean that her peers doubted her opinions, and she was upset that they did not give her suggestions for revision. Reactions like Katie's are not unusual in Chinese classrooms. Therefore, when the need to be sensitive to classroom culture is considered, suggestions may be perceived in a less negative light. Similar observations had been made by Harris and Silva, who suggested that tutors working with ESL students could play the role of solution providers to a certain extent, if the problems involved require knowledge about L2 rhetorics which the students do not have.

In addition, when assessing suggestions, the nature of the suggestions should be considered. Suggestions that appropriate the content are less desirable because they take the writing out of the authors' hands. In this study such suggestions tended to get rejected more often than other types of suggestions, even by writers like An-Lin, who had a weak sense of ownership of her texts. On the other hand, suggestions on form may be more acceptable (e.g., suggesting that a conclusion be added). The stage of the writing process that drafts are in and the extent of the elaboration in suggestions are two other considerations. With a draft that is in the discovery stage, responses that help the
authors explore content and form may be appropriate. With one that is almost finished, prescriptive suggestions could be practical. A suggestion that rewrites a segment of the essay for the author would be less desirable than one that just gives detailed guidelines for revision.

Another significant change is that the students tended to discuss problems more frequently and in a more extended manner as the course progressed. This was particularly obvious for Sho-Li and Cha-Yang and to a smaller extent for An-Lin. Such a tendency is considered as a sign of growth in the ability to analyze writing. This finding seemed to be consistent with results from Ritchie (1983) and Barcelo-Hill (1988), which showed that students diagnosed writing more carefully and commented in a more elaborate manner over time. As for Man-Hua, the tendency was there but it was far less obvious.

Praising was the least important strategy for most students. For the whole group the changes in its quality were minor. Most of the praise was brief and general. This strategy seemed to have been treated in a more perfunctory manner than the others. The students seemed inclined to treat their group as a place where they could trouble-shoot writing problems in a business-like manner, instead of a place where they could share and celebrate writing. This is very different from Liner’s (1984) group of 10th- and 11th-graders, which functioned more as a support group for
sharing writings than as a panel for evaluation and criticism.

**Before-Session Peer Critiques**

On the before-session peer critiques for all five assignments, Cha-Yang made the most comments, followed by Sho-Li and An-Lin, and then Man-Hua. In the researcher's opinion, the quality of Cha-Yang's comments were the best, followed by Sho-Li's, An-Lin's, and then Man-Hua's. The students' performance in critiquing writing seemed to parallel their writing ability, which was consistent with Pimsarn's (1986) findings that university ESL students' L2 reading and writing abilities were closely related. Man-Hua was an exception. In her case, the poor performance might be a result of an unwillingness to spend time to critique drafts. For most of the students, the aspect of writing most commented on was Content, followed by Structure, then Style, and then Clarity and Coherence. This finding seemed consistent with those of Danis (1982), Ziv (1983), and Bencich (1989/1990), which showed that college students and 11th-graders tend to focus on content. Such a tendency was particularly obvious in the beginning of the course. There were also indications that An-Lin and Sho-Li, who had weaker critiquing ability, and Man-Hua, who was unprepared for the critiquing sessions, tended to focus on content more than Cha-Yang, the best writer in the group. This was probably
because it is easier to talk about content since less knowledge about writing is required.

The second aspect most frequently commented on was Structure. Cha-Yang, the strongest writer, was able to comment on this aspect in the beginning. Weaker writers like An-Lin and Sho-Li could not do so until the beginning of the second semester. Of the three aspects other than Content, Structure was the one that the students began to notice first. This probably reflected the fact that the researcher put a strong emphasis on Structure when she responded to the students' texts, since she found it to be a serious problem.

The third aspect most frequently commented on was Style. The two stronger writers, Cha-Yang and Man-Hua, made their first comment on this aspect at an earlier stage (Session 4) than the weaker ones (Session 6). Most students' sense of style was very limited. All of Sho-Li's and An-Lin's comments were praise about the use of a story or example. Man-Hua also made only two comments about language style. Cha-Yang, whose command of English was the best in the group, made the most comments on language style and the effects of certain ways of presenting ideas. The researcher believes that this lack of sensitivity toward style is typical of L2 writers who are still struggling with language. It may also reflect the fact that the researcher
rarely commented on Style, since these students had many other more serious problems that needed attention.

The aspect least often mentioned was Clarity and Coherence. Again both of the stronger writers, Cha-Yang and Man-Hua, identified their first problems at an earlier stage (Session 4) than the two weaker ones (Session 6 or 8). The small number of comments made by most of the students showed that the ability to analyze problems in this area developed very slowly.

Praise, a common form of response, accounted for an average of 38% of the comments made by the four students. However, for most students, a very large percentage of the praise was focused on a small number of elements, indicating that they praised in a somewhat repetitious and superficial manner. The narrow focus was obvious in the weakest student, An-Lin, and the most unmotivated student, Man-Hua. The best student, Cha-Yang, praised a wider range of aspects and her statements were also more specific.

The majority of comments the students made were quite valid. Only 11 (6%) of the total of 195 comments they made were problematic. This was consistent with Danis’ study (1980), which showed that 90% of the comment made by college sophomores were accurate. It also supported Caulk’s study (1994), which proved that 89% of college ESL students provided valid suggestions and only 6% of their suggestions were invalid. This present study was in disagreement with
many others that claimed that peer response is highly problematic, such as those by Pianko and Radzik (1980) and Ziv (1983), which described peer response as the blind leading the blind. It was also in disagreement with Rothstein-Vandergriff and Gilson’s study (1988), which reported that students spend much time on minor weaknesses. The students in the present study devoted most of their time discussing problems that went beyond error hunting, and they in fact pointed out many major problems. The differences between the findings of this study and those of studies that showed peer response to be ineffective could be a result of the differences in the way the responding tasks were set up, the guidance students received, the preparation students made for peer response sessions, etc.

However, the students sometimes did fail to read the texts analytically, as reported in previous studies by Flynn (1982) and Rothstein-Vandergriff-Gilson (1988). Many of the problematic comments made by the students in this study involved failure to assess coherence. Sometimes the mistakes may have resulted from careless reading. The students’ critiques also showed other undesirable characteristics, even though they may not have adversely affected the writing. Specifically, all the students had the tendency to make suggestions that appropriate the authors’ content. The researcher speculates that at the early stage when the students were still inexperienced in
identifying flaws in the writing, it was natural for them to suggest additional ideas, which does not require much knowledge about writing. It might also mean that they were not aware of the inappropriateness of interfering with others' content. Another undesirable characteristic was that the students occasionally seemed to be bound by their rigid adherence to some writing rules they had not completely mastered (e.g., the need to have topic sentences). The limited understanding and rigid application of rules shown by these students was observed in similar studies by Hawkins (1976), Sommers (1980), and Beach and Eaton (1984).

For An-Lin and Sho-Li the quantity and quality of their comments increased as the course progressed. These two students' initial critiquing ability was the lowest in the group and training in critiquing had helped them greatly. In Cha-Yang's case, there was no obvious increase in the quantity of her comments, but there was in the quality. Her ability to critique was higher to start with and therefore only fine improvement could be detected. As for Man-Hua, there was actually a decline in quantity, even though there was a slight improvement in quality. Her negative attitude toward peer response probably prevented her from improving much.

For most of the students, there was an obvious shift from an almost exclusive concern over content to a broader
view of the writing. This finding has been reported by Ritchie (1983) and Ziv (1983), who showed that the students tend to focus on a wider variety of issues over time. For Cha-Yang and Man-Hua, the tendency to appropriate the authors’ content ceased at a certain point, but for Sho-Li and An-Lin it continued until the end of the course. It was probably harder for weaker students to leave their own ideas about the subject matter behind and help the authors explore their content or identify its deficiency. For Cha-Yang and Man-Hua, their better ability to analyze writing might have made it easier for them to assume the authors’ mental framework and use that as a basis for evaluating texts. All the students improved their ability to identify problems over the course.

The above findings on critiquing strategies and before-session peer critiques suggest that training that combined peer response and teacher response over a period of two semesters was effective in improving students’ critiquing skills. Since the students were able to comment on higher-level elements, and only 6% of their comments were invalid, teachers can trust students to be effective responders. However, since weaker students may not show obvious improvement for a full semester, long-term training programs should be planned.
Before-Session Self Critiques and Comparison With Before-Session Peer Critiques

In terms of the quantity and quality of comments on the before-session self critiques, Cha-Yang performed the best, followed by Sho-Li, An-Lin, and then Man-Hua. Cha-Yang made the most specific comments and Man-Hua the vaguest. Man-Hua was also the only one whose comments on the peer critiques were repeated on her self critiques, showing a failure to look into problems unique to her own texts.

For all the students, the quantity of comments increased from Session 2 to Session 4, but after that there was no clear increasing trend. As to the quality of comments, the students performed poorly in Session 2, as indicated by their inability to identify flaws in writing. By Session 4 they improved considerably and began to discuss a few problems. However, after this session only Sho-Li showed any further improvement.

The students’ performances in self and peer critiques were similar in some ways. In both situations comments on Content were dominant, and over time there was a shift from an almost exclusive concern with the Content to a broader view of the writing. Both showed a slower development in the ability to look beyond Content. However, the quantity and quality of the comments on the self critiques were lower than those on the peer critiques. The former were less effective in identifying problems and were more vague. On
the self critiques, the students sometimes explained their writing process or why the writing was unsatisfactory, or put down comments that were reminders to themselves of tasks yet to be completed, instead of discussing problems in the writing. There were also more comments which showed a rigid adherence to certain writing rules. The students showed much less progress in the self critiques than in the peer critiques.

The weaker performance in self critiquing could be the result of greater difficulty in critiquing one's own texts, as suggested by some studies. Bartlett (1981) showed that as writers read their texts, they engaged in interpretative activities that were based on the use of privileged information about their intentions as writers. Inexperienced writers might have particular difficulty inhibiting their use of privileged information and might therefore have difficulty assessing the texts objectively. Another possible cause of the poor performance in self critiques was the students' dislike of critiquing their own writing. Also, since there was no need to present their self critiques during the peer response sessions, there was even less incentive to write them.

Barcelow-Hill's study (1988) of college writers showed that the group using peer response outperformed the group receiving teacher response in critiquing their peers' expository texts, but they performed similarly in critiquing
their own texts. Greene (1988) also found that basic college writers identified a lower percentage of problems on the semantic level of discourse in their own expository texts than in those of others. Findings from the present study appear to be consistent.

**Impact of Group Discussion on Students’ Views About Texts**

Peer response seemed to have affected all the students regarding their views about the texts being discussed, but to different degrees. It seemed to have the greatest impact on the best writer, Cha-Yang. Her after-session peer and self critiques showed that some of the comments she made before the sessions were modified. They also showed that she not only copied down some of the opinions she heard during the discussion but also formed new ones on her own. This meant that, besides passively learning about what her peers thought, she was actively reformulating and creating knowledge. In Sho-Li’s case, the impact of peer response was smaller. The comments on her after-session peer critiques showed that a smaller percentage of her before-session comments were modified, and a larger percentage of her *New* comments coincided with her peers’ opinions. With regard to her self critiques, none of the comments she wrote before the sessions changed, and all the comments on her after-session self critiques coincided with her peers’ opinions. This suggested that Sho-Li’s cognitive reorganization was less significant and that her learning
was more passive. For An-Lin and Man-Hua, the impact of peer response was even less. None of the comments on their before-session peer or self critiques were modified, and all of the comments on their after-session critiques coincided with their peers' comments. Their reaction to peer response was the most passive in the group.

Even though the students were impacted differently, they all learned from their peers, either in a passive or active manner. The differences between what they could do before and after the sessions resemble what Vygotsky (1978) described as "the zone of proximal development." The Changed and New comments are the reflection of knowledge that evolves as communities of knowledgeable peers interact and thus shape and extend one another's ideas, as proposed by Bruffee (1984). These comments are also evidence that group discussion causes individual cognitive reorganization, as proposed by Barnes and Todd (1978) and Forman and Cazden (1985). This study supported other studies which showed that peer response cultivated critical thinking skills (David, 1986; Nystrand, 1986; Urzua, 1987, L2; Greene, 1988; Herrington & Cadman, 1991).

The different levels of impact peer response had on these four students can also be examined through Vygotsky's (1978) theory. His theory says that higher mental functions first appear on the "interpsychological (i.e., social) plane and only later on the "intrapsychological" (i.e.,
individual) plane. That is, the learning process is the process of internalization, a move from other-regulation to self-regulation.

The fact that An-Lin was able to make progress in her before-session critiques throughout the course showed that she did internalize the learning to a certain extent. However, she failed to produce new ideas after the group discussion throughout the year. This indicated that her learning was largely a result of other-regulation. Her dependence on other-regulation could be explained in several ways. It may be a reflection of her lack of self confidence in her critiquing ability. It was possible that she did not even set her mind to forming new opinions during the group discussion, and instead opted only to listen to what her peers said. Another explanation is that she was a weaker writer and her critiquing ability was not well developed yet. It is possible that she was not able to form new opinions on her own even after the group discussion. A third explanation is that even if she did have some new ideas after the group discussion, she might have kept them to herself out of lack of confidence.

In Cha-Yang’s case, the greater cognitive reorganization she went through may be a reflection of the higher degree of self-regulation she achieved in the group, as compared with the other students. Since she was an independent and confident thinker whose entry level
critiquing ability happened to be the highest in the group, she was probably actively creating new knowledge while she listened to her peers talk. Her reservations about the validity of her peers' comments might also have prepared her to do her own thinking. Sho-Li, whose critiquing ability and confidence level lay between Cha-Yang's and An-Lin's, seemed to have a middle level of self-regulation. In Man-Hua's case, the researcher suspects that the low level of impact peer response had on her was probably more a result of her negative attitude toward peer response rather than a reflection of the level of self- or other-regulation she achieved. Her writing and critiquing ability were better than Sho-Li's and An-Lin's, and yet she did not make the improvement the latter two made.

How the level of self- or other-regulation affects learning is an interesting issue. The positive side to An-Lin's performance was that she learned much about writing from her peers. The negative side was that she allowed her peers to do her thinking during the researcher's course. Scholars like Graves (1984), Brannon and Knoblauch (1982), and Sommers (1982) have long advocated the importance of letting writers think on their own. Smit (1989) also suspected that the inherent danger of collaborative learning lies in its tendency to make group members conform to the expectation of the group and thus suppress individual voice. Real learning may be hindered if she continues to let others
think for her on a long-term basis. However, for An-Lin, the initial stage of imitation may have been unavoidable. Such imitation may have functioned as scaffolding provided by her more knowledgeable peers in the beginning stage of learning, and eventually she may take over her own learning. This learning model has been proposed by Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1978), Brown and Ferrara (1985), and promulgated by many other scholars who believe in collaborative learning (Bayer, 1990).

In general, the comments on Sho-Li’s and Cha-Yang’s after-session peer and self critiques also suggested that peer response was less effective in helping them form new opinions about their own texts than about their peers’. (The one exception was that data from Cha-Yang’s Changed comments did not support this.) The differential effects may again be attributed to the greater difficulty one has in distancing oneself from one’s own writing (Bartlett, 1981). These findings are consistent with a previous finding in the present study, specifically, that students made comments of better quality when they critiqued their peers’ texts than when they critiqued their own.

On the other hand, in An-Lin’s and Man-Hua’s cases, peer response did not seem to have differential effects on the modification of existing opinions or the formation of new ones about their peers’ and their own texts. None of the before-session comments on their peer or self critiques
were changed and no new ideas were formed. Since these two students were either very passive or very unmotivated in their learning, they did not actively reformulate or create knowledge when they were in the group, regardless whether they were critiquing others' texts or their own.

**Reactions to Peers' Comments and Attitudes toward Ownership of Texts**

The four students were quite different in their receptivity to peers' comments, in keeping with the observations of Baum Brunner (1990). Cha-Yang was an independent reviser who had a strong sense of ownership of her writing, and she incorporated only 35% of the suggestions she received. She was more like Bender's (1989/1990) advanced college writer Alma, who incorporated explicit peer cues about revision if the cues were compatible with her own views of the writing. She was also like Herrington and Cadman's (1991) college students who weighed their peers' advice critically.

Man-Hua also had a strong sense of ownership of her writing, and she incorporated only 30% of the suggestions she received. However, Cha-Yang's decisions about whether to incorporate peers' suggestions were often based on rational reasoning about the needs of the texts, and questions about the writing rarely threatened her sense of authority. Man-Hua, on the other hand, reacted defensively and therefore failed to benefit from suggestions that could
have been helpful for her. She was somewhat like Berkenkotter's resistent college writer Stan, who blindly resisted revising according to his peers' suggestions.

On the other hand, both An-Lin and Sho-Li, who had a weaker sense of ownership of their writing, were very receptive to peers' suggestions and incorporated 75% and 68% of their peers' suggestions, respectively. They resembled Bender's college writer Dawn, who was very receptive of her peers' comments and made many revisions in response. The difference between An-Lin and Sho-Li was that when there were conflicts between their ideas about writing and those of their peers, An-Lin had a stronger tendency to compromise. Her revisions sometimes showed that she even followed her peers' suggestions without knowing why. In this sense she was somewhat similar to college student Joann in Berkenkotter's study (1984), who was oversensitive to her peers comments and temporarily lost sight of the purpose of her writing. As for Sho-Li, when such conflicts arose, she had the tendency to give up authority over her texts in the first semester. However, in the second semester she became more assertive. She was somewhat like the 11th-graders in Bencich's (1989/1990) study, who at first revised according to the suggestions from their group under pressure and later on assumed authority over their texts by using peer response as a vehicle for rethinking their own writing decisions.
The above findings do not support Sitko's (1989) or Stone's (1981) studies that showed that the more able 11th-graders and college students were more accepting of peer response than the less able ones. The contradiction is not surprising because the studies mentioned above all have very small sample sizes and individual differences probably account for the contradiction.

Man-Hua’s case showed that there was a close connection between her feelings about the group and her decisions to incorporate their suggestions. Her disappointment and anger prevented her from appreciating the suggestions, and her rejection of them had nothing to do with comment quality. This has been observed in a similar study by Nelson and Murphy (1993), which showed that when ESL students interacted cooperatively in groups, they were more likely to use peers’ suggestions.

The findings also suggested that what transpired in previous peer response sessions often affected what happened in later sessions. In the first semester Man-Hua was disappointed by the comments she received. In the second, when she started to get better comments, she had already developed the tendency to reject comments. Her rejection of certain comments at a certain session may have nothing to do with what happened during that session, but with what happened previously. The vicious cycle she created by handing in her first drafts late is similar. An-Lin’s and
Sho-Li's fruitful early experience in the group probably motivated them to prepare themselves well for group sessions so they could reciprocate and help other group members. All these things reflect the complexity of group dynamics.

**Revision Performance**

Most students seemed to be quite capable of judging whether to incorporate their peers' suggestions. Cha-Yang, Sho-Li, and An-Lin made only 1, 4, and 1 mistakes, respectively. This suggests that peer response is an effective way to facilitate revision. Man-Hua made slightly more mistakes by rejecting 5 valid suggestions, probably as a result of her unwillingness to consider her peers' advice.

In five assignments, Sho-Li and An-Lin made 28 and 24 higher-level changes, respectively, in response to their peers' suggestions. Even Cha-Yang and Man-Hua made 9 and 8 higher-level changes respectively. It is clear that the students did incorporate their peers' suggestions, as shown in a similar study by Nelson and Murphy (1993) about university ESL students. Also they were able to direct their revision efforts to substantive changes when asked to focus on higher-level concerns and when scaffolding of peer response was provided. Such revision patterns were very different from those shown in studies by Chandrasegaran (1986), Lai (1986), and Gaskill (1986/1987), which showed that L2 college student writers tended to focus their revision efforts more on correcting language errors than on
making meaning changes, when compared with their L1 counterparts, in a situation where peer response was not used. The revisions made by students in Group 4 also confirmed this, indicating that peer response was an effective way of facilitating substantive revisions.

The level of success each student achieved in her peer-initiated revisions was different. Most of Sho-Li’s revisions brought about great improvement. An-Lin’s revisions also improved the writing greatly, even though to a lesser extent than Sho-Li’s. This finding is consistent with Danis (1982), who claimed that 60% of the revisions made in response to peers’ suggestions improved the writing. Cha-Yang’s revisions were only moderately successful. Her problems were more subtle and complex than those of Sho-Li’s and An-Lin’s, and she was even aware of them when writing her first drafts. Rubin (1983) showed that students might not be able to carry out the revisions suggested by their peers even though they might understand their problems very well, and Cha-Yang’s lack of complete success in revision appeared to be a good example. Man-Hua made the fewest revisions and had the least success.

An-Lin and Sho-Li benefitted more from peer response than the others. They both have a random composing style and made many obvious mistakes in the form of the writing. Therefore it was easy for the other stronger writers to point out their problems. Since they were never defensive
about their writing, they were able to appreciate the suggestions given to them. Cha-Yang's and Man-Hua's lesser success with revisions might be explained partially by the fact that they received fewer valid comments. In Cha-Yang's case, she planned her writing carefully and did not make many obvious mistakes which the other weaker writers could detect. In Man-Hua's case, even though the group pointed out some of her major problems, she did not get as much help as Sho-Li and An-Lin did. When her peers did identify problems for her, she was often too defensive to recognize them.

As far as self-initiated revisions are concerned, all the students except Man-Hua made some substantive revisions. For An-Lin and Sho-Li, who used to correct only language errors, the substantive revisions they initiated were unusual. The thought-provoking process of the group discussions might have prompted them to form new ideas for revision on their own and the moral support from peers might also have motivated them to work harder. This is suggested by the fact that An-Lin and Sho-Li both told the researcher that they often thought about what their peers said after they got out of the peer response sessions (field notes).

Similarly, all the students in Group 4 also achieved success in their revisions, each to a different degree. One student often made many higher-level revisions which brought about much improvement. Two other students made a smaller
number of substantive revisions which were effective about half of the time. The fourth student made mostly surface-level revisions that only improved the writing slightly. Again, the performance of this group showed the effectiveness of peer response as a way to facilitate substantive revision.

Changes in Audience Awareness, Revision Patterns, and Attitudes towards Writing

According to An-Lin, her sense of audience did not change and she still did not think about her reader when she wrote. Cha-Yang and Sho-Li said they became more conscious of content and structure, their writing processes, and their problems. Man-Hua reported no change.

The different degrees of audience awareness reported by the students later in the course may be a reflection of the different degrees to which they internalized what they learned about writing. An-Lin often compliantly followed her peers' suggestions and did not always clearly know the reason behind her revisions. Therefore she did not allow herself to really develop a sense of audience through internalization. In Cha-Yang's case, since she always weighed her peers' suggestions carefully, she might have come to understand the effects her writing had on others, and thus eventually internalized the audience's needs. As for Sho-Li, over the course, she gradually learned to assess her peers' comments, as indicated by the reasoning she
demonstrated when the researcher asked about her reactions
to the comments received and her revisions. Her responses
showed that she was gradually internalizing the audience’s
needs. In Man-Hua’s case, since she refused to take peer
response seriously, she did not allow her peers’ comments to
prompt her to reflect on her writing, thus losing many
opportunities to think about her audience.

This improvement in the students’ audience awareness
was in agreement with findings from previous studies by
Nystrand (1986), Urzua (1987, L2), and Nelson and Murphy
(1992, L2). The increase in metacognition of the writing
process has been reported in similar studies by Coleman

With respect to the changes in the students’ revision
patterns, An-Lin and Sho-Li shifted dramatically from making
only surface level changes in their Freshman Composition
classes to making large-scale substantive revisions
throughout the researcher’s course. This supported research
by Moffett (1968), Benson (1979), Jordan (1983/1984),
Bencich (1989/1990), and Bender (1989/1990), who claimed
that peer response groups motivate students to revise more.
For An-Lin, the change in her revision patterns was probably
a result of her compliance with peers’ suggestions, since
she followed suggestions without always doing her own
thinking. In Sho-Li’s case, it might be a result of both
compliance and an increasing audience awareness.
For Man-Hua and Cha-Yang, peer response did not have as great an effect. The extent of Man-Hua's revisions only improved slightly, and by and large she still made surface level changes. Since she rejected most of her peers' comments and she herself did not have good revision skills, she did not change her revision patterns much. In Cha-Yang's case, she continued to do some substantive changes as she did in the past. In fact the impact peer response had on her appeared to be more in the form of increased awareness of her writing process than actual changes in her revision patterns. This is not surprising since she received fewer valid comments than the others. She incorporated only a small proportion of them and actually depended more on her own ideas for revision.

There were no dramatic changes in the students' attitudes about writing over the course. Sho-Li's writing apprehension decreased a little. An-Lin, who liked writing even though she did not have much confidence, enjoyed writing slightly more. Their successful experience in the group probably contributed to this outcome. Similar improvements have been reported by Fox (1980), Nystrand (1986), and Cover (1987/1988). Cha-Yang and Man-Hua, who had always liked to write very much, continued to express strong motivation to write in the future. However, Man-Hua seemed less inclined to do the assignments for this course. Her experience with peer response did have some negative
effects. As for Cha-Yang, her interest in writing was very strong, so the fact that peer response was only slightly helpful to her probably did not matter.

These changes in the students' audience awareness and attitudes toward writing were probably the result of a combination of factors such as peer response, teacher response, class lectures, writing experience from other classes, etc. As for the changes in revision patterns, the researcher withheld her comments until the second drafts were turned in, so the changes described over the course of five assignments were more likely a reflection of the effects of peer response. However, since the other factors mentioned above might still have contributed, the link between peer response and changes in revision patterns and audience awareness should be interpreted carefully.

Conclusions

This study of one peer response group may be limited in generalizability. However, the findings may be translatable or typical enough to provide insights to teachers in a similar context and researchers with similar research plans (Erickson, 1986). The findings relating to the five research questions for this study are summarized below.

1. How do students interact in peer response groups? What affects their interaction? What are the changes in interaction over time?
With respect to group interaction, the use of critique sheets appeared to restrain the students' participation initially. The use of native language also had an effect, but each student reacted differently to it. For the student who had a great fear of speaking English, the increase in the use of Chinese enhanced her interaction. For others who had no such fear, the link between the use of Chinese and their participation seemed less obvious.

Student characteristics such as defensiveness/receptiveness or assertiveness/passiveness appeared to play a very important role in student interaction patterns. Timidity hindered some students from participating productively. The ones that were more assertive were more successful at communication, and were thus able to benefit both themselves and the others. Defensiveness tended to prevent one student from appreciating the value of the comments given to her.

The rate of improvement in interaction skills also differed with each student. For the most timid student, improvement did not become very obvious until the end of the course. The student whose interaction was hindered by a fear of speaking English started to improve considerably in the beginning of the second semester when she increased her use of native language greatly. For the student who was assertive and had better entry-level L2 communication skills, her improvement throughout the course was less
dramatic but significant. As for the one who was defensive, her interaction did not show much improvement. The fact that most of the improvement did not become obvious until the second semester indicates that the development of interaction skills is a slow process.

2. How do L2 students critique texts? What is the nature of the comments they make? What are the changes in their performance over time? What are the differences between the development of their ability to critique their own texts and those of their peers?

When responding to peers' texts, the strategy most often used by most of the students in this course was making suggestions, followed by discussing writing problems, and then by praising. The students were very suggestion-oriented, especially in the beginning. As the course progressed, the students tended to make their suggestions more sophisticated by combining them with restatements of what the authors did and discussions of problems. Suggestions also grew more elaborate. The discussion of problems became more frequent and extended. The students also felt less obligated to follow their discussions of problems with suggestions. Praising showed the least improvement, indicating that the students treated it in a more or less perfunctory manner. For most students, none of these changes became obvious until the second semester, suggesting that the acquisition of critiquing skills took
time. The strongest writer in the group made the most progress in her use of strategies. The weak student whose participation was greatly hindered by a fear of speaking English improved dramatically when she was allowed to use her first language. The other weak student, who was very timid in her participation, improved but to a lesser extent. The student who refused to read the drafts well ahead of time made the least progress.

The peer critiques students wrote before the peer response sessions showed that the element most commented on was content, followed by organization, structure, and format, then style and tone, and then clarity, logic, and coherence. For most of the students there was an obvious shift over the course from an almost exclusive concern with content to a broader view of the writing. The time required for this shift to occur was different with each student. The stronger writers were able to look into aspects beyond content in the first semester, but the weaker ones could not do so until the second. The tendency to appropriate the authors' content ceased at a certain point for the stronger writers, but for the weaker ones it continued throughout the course. Over the two-semester course, the two weaker writers improve significantly, and the strongest writer also improved, albeit to a lesser extent. The least improvement was made by the student who refused to prepare herself for peer response sessions. Only 6% of the comments on the peer
critiques written by the four students before the sessions were really problematic, suggesting the potential value of peer response as a means to facilitate revision.

The students' performances in the peer and self critiques they wrote before the sessions were similar in some ways. Both showed that comments on content were dominant and there was a shift from content to a broader view of writing over time. However, the quantity and quality of the comments on the self critiques were lower than those on the peer critiques. The self critiques were vague and the students were less effective in identifying problems. In general, for most of the students, self critiques did not show much improvement, but peer critiques did improve significantly.

3. **What impact does group discussion have on students' views about the texts being discussed?**

The comments on the peer and self critiques written after peer response sessions suggested that group discussion seemed to impact individual students in different ways. After the discussion, the stronger writers were not only better able to look at the writing through the eyes of their peers but also were able to form new opinions of their own. In contrast, the weaker ones used peer response sessions more as occasions to absorb their peers' views about the writing than as opportunities to form new opinions of their own. In fact, the student who was weakest in ability and
also most receptive to her peers’ comments and the one who had a very negative attitude toward peer response did not produce any new opinions at all, other than those already mentioned by their peers. The process of discussion seemed to cause more cognitive reorganization in the stronger student who also had a better attitude toward peer response. In addition, peer response seemed to be more effective in helping the students form new perspectives about their peers’ writing than about their own. This may indicate a higher level of difficulty in distancing oneself from one’s own writing.

4. How do L2 students react to peers’ comments? What are their attitudes toward ownership of their writing?

The students were quite different in their use of peers’ comments. The two weaker writers were very receptive and used 75% or 68% of peers’ suggestions. The weakest one occasionally even followed the suggestions without knowing why. The best writer, who had a strong sense of ownership of her writing and used her own judgement to decide whether to incorporate suggestions, used only 35% of the suggestions. The student who was very defensive about her writing also had a negative attitude toward peer response, and she used only 30% of the suggestions. Sometimes her defensiveness blinded her from the value of the suggestions.

The students’ ways of handling ownership of their writing was revealed by the way they used the comments on
their self critiques. The two compliant writers tended to incorporate only those comments which were confirmed by their peers, while the most assertive writer’s decisions were less affected by them. The defensive writer ignored her own comments, which were not confirmed by her peers. However, this was probably more a reflection of her practice of not revising than a reaction to her peers’ opinions. Whenever there were conflicts between the students’ ideas about writing and those of their peers’, one of the two weaker writers always gave up authority over her texts. The other tended to do the same in the first semester but started to assert herself in the second. The strongest writer and the defensive one were inclined to stay with their original ideas.

5. What is the quality of students’ revisions made in response to peers’ suggestions? What are the changes in their revision patterns, audience awareness, and attitudes toward writing?

The level of success achieved in peer-initiated revisions differed greatly with each student. The two weaker writers’ second drafts improved significantly, but the strongest writer’s improved to a lesser extent. The student most resistent to peer response did the least revision and showed only very slight improvement. The two weaker writers shifted dramatically from making only surface-level changes in their freshman year to making
substantive changes throughout this course, not only in response to their peers' suggestions but also on their own. The other two writers showed little change in their revision patterns. The strongest writer, who had always made substantive revisions in the past, continued to do so. She also made the most self-initiated revisions in the group. The one with negative attitudes about peer response was unable to make substantive revisions in the past, and remained unable to make such revisions throughout this course.

Over the course, some students increased their audience awareness. Both the stronger writer, who was able to revise independently, and a weaker writer who was learning to do so became more aware of their content and structure. However, neither the other weaker writer who often revised compliantly nor the average writer who was negative about peer response showed much change in their audience awareness. The attitude of the two weaker writers toward writing improved slightly, but the other two showed little change.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that peer response was an effective way of developing writing and critiquing skills for most students. This was reflected by the improvement in the quality of their second drafts, their performance when critiquing writing, changes in their views about their own and their peers' writing, and the
improvement of their group interaction skills. In general, the weaker students may have benefitted more than the stronger ones. Even the one who had a negative attitude toward peer response improved her performance to a certain extent.

For most students the group served as a resource for learning. This was clearly shown in the impact of group discussion on the students' views about their peers' and their own texts. The students expanded their knowledge by absorbing what their peers knew and created new knowledge by reformulating what they heard. After exchanging opinions during the peer response sessions, the students became more aware of their problems. At revision peers' comments were used to improve first drafts. The teacher was no longer their sole source for help.

The rate of learning differed with each student. It depended on her entry-level ability and a host of other variables such as personality, attitude, etc. In general, for most students, improvement in critiquing and interaction skills did not become apparent until the second semester. The skills needed in a peer response group obviously took time to develop.

The affective dimensions seemed closely interwoven with the cognitive ones. Negative feelings about the group seemed to make one student unwilling to recognize the value of peer response, and thus she failed to benefit from it as
much as the others did. The two weaker writers’ positive feelings about the group and the group leader’s sense of duty to contribute may have caused them to appreciate the group discussions more and thereby gain greater benefit from them. In a sense, what happened in later sessions was closely connected to experiences the students had earlier, suggesting the intricacy of group dynamics.

Many variables affected the success the students had with interaction during the group sessions, for instance, their attitudes toward the group, personality, age, status, and their proficiency level in speaking, reading, and writing. Procedural elements, such as the choice of language for communication and the use of critique sheets, all played an important role. Since interaction patterns are shaped by so many variables, they take time to modify and are also hard to predict. It cannot be assumed that a group will work productively simply because the teacher has provided procedures and lists of questions for students to follow. The dynamics of an EFL group is a complex and intriguing subject.

Results of this study strongly support the use of first language in the group. One student’s use of Chinese appeared to have facilitated her learning to a great extent. When the cognitive demands of learning an unfamiliar and difficult task were eased by the use of a language the student was comfortable with, she was better able to devote
her attention to learning the new task. First language use, which is discouraged by many L2 teachers, did not detract from the learning experience but added to it.

Peer response is not without its problems. The stronger students did not get as much feedback as the weaker ones. One student's distrust of her group members' ability to provide feedback, combined with other factors such as her age, status, and personality, made her experience with the group a very negative one. Writing groups may not benefit all students equally. However, perhaps more effective teaching and interactional strategies could be developed to address the needs of the more able writers in a group.

Overall, peer response groups provided the students with a supportive community for learning. The group acted as live audience for each other. They interacted in the group to develop their language for writing and test out their theories for writing. By listening to their group members critique writing, they were also gradually acquiring the skills needed to assess writing. The group served as a supportive, non-threatening community in which the students cared for each other by sharing their writing and collaborating to find solutions to problems. They even came to know each other as friends. In the group, learning was no longer a solitary endeavor.
Implications for Teaching

Several pedagogical implications are suggested by this study of peer response. As far as the effects of peer response on revision are concerned, the teacher should be aware that peers' comments affect each student in a different way. It may be very effective in helping weaker writers revise, but perhaps it is less helpful for stronger ones. Provisions could be made to help the latter. For example, the teacher might work with them more, or the grouping might be changed occasionally to allow them to work with other stronger writers sometimes.

This study has shown that very few of the comments the students put on peer critiques were problematic, and in fact many of these comments pointed out major problems. The students also often exercised good judgement about whether to incorporate a suggestion or not. Therefore the teacher does not have to worry that peer response is a form of the blind leading the blind. However, since the students in this study still made some problematic comments and also were not always able to solve writing problems even if they were made aware of them by their peers, teacher support may be necessary.

This study showed that occasionally some students might be so compliant toward peers' suggestions as to incorporate them without knowing why. These students should be made aware of their tendency to do so. They could be encouraged
to understand the nature of their problems by asking their peers or the teacher. The teacher may also need to encourage them constantly to help develop their self confidence in their own thinking.

This study indicated that students' age, status, personality, and confidence in their ability were factors that could cause clashes within a group. When setting up groups, the teacher should be aware that students with characteristics that might cause clashes should not be forced to participate in peer response. The study also showed that some students' disappointing experience with peer response might be caused by their failure to hand in drafts well before peer response sessions to allow sufficient time for other group members to read them. The teacher should be strict about exchanging drafts ahead of time.

As this study showed, the passiveness and defensiveness students exhibited at peer response sessions undermined the effectiveness of group discussions. Since these characteristics do not change easily, the teacher should be ready to deal with this on a long-term basis. For students who are overly passive, the teacher might give them more encouragement. They should realize that any sharing of opinions, whether valid or not, is a form of contribution, since it stimulates discussion. The teacher could also set up group procedures in a way that would allow such students
to talk. For example, the teacher might ask the group leader to elicit participation from members who are too quiet.

The study showed that critique sheets might have a restraining effect on group interaction initially. To counter this, after a responder finishes reading a critique sheet, the group leader (or the author) could summarize what he/she heard and elicit comments from the others. The group can then discuss the issues more deeply.

Students who may be apprehensive about speaking English might be allowed to use some Chinese at peer response sessions, at least initially, so that their participation is not unduly impeded. This may help them retain interest in participating in a task that they are inexperienced with. As students begin to feel more confident about their performance, they can be encouraged to use more English. Other students who are not apprehensive about speaking English may be told that English classes are places for practicing English and therefore it is socially acceptable not to code-switch when their peers lapse into their first language.

As the study showed, improvement of critiquing skills as evidenced by critique sheets took time. For very weak students, obvious progress was not observed until the second semester. They were strongest critiquing content and were not able to respond to other areas until the second
semester. The teacher might direct students to look into these areas more and also provide more help.

When responding to writing, students tend to be suggestion-oriented and particularly have the tendency to make suggestions that appropriate the authors' content. They can be encouraged to avoid making suggestions without discussing the associated writing problems and also refrain from making suggestions that take over others' content. They can learn to help the authors explore what they want to write and how they want to write it.

This study indicated that students were weaker in indirect responding approaches such as questioning and mirroring. Some students also failed to understand the purpose behind the questions they were asked. The researcher believes that indirect responses are valuable since they are less likely to offend sensitive authors. Students might be taught to appreciate and also make these indirect responses. Teacher modeling may be needed to help students acquire these skills.

As the study showed, some authors were sensitive to any suggestion that there was something wrong with their writing. To solve this problem, responders should be aware of the risks authors take in sharing their writing. The responders could be reminded to show appreciation for the writing besides discussing its problems. When addressing the weakness of the writing, they could mirror the effects
of the writing, instead of directly stating what is wrong or making a suggestion for revision.

The teacher should be aware that peer response impacts students differently. As the study showed, peer response appeared to be more effective in helping the stronger writers form new opinions about either their peers’ writing or their own. The teacher should be aware that the weaker writers may be passively accepting what their peers say, instead of actively forming new knowledge when they are in the group. The teacher may need to encourage them constantly to build up their self confidence and to prompt them to do independent thinking. The teacher should also be aware that peer response may be more effective in helping students form new ideas about others’ writing than their own. The development of the ability to critique one’s writing seems to require long-term training.

**Implications for Future Research**

Several implications for future research can be drawn from this study. First, this study has illustrated the strength of longitudinal research. A two-semester study allowed the researcher to detect slow development in weaker students’ performance in critiquing writing and group interaction skills that would not otherwise be evident. In the future, more longitudinal studies should be conducted to study the development of skills that require long-term training.
Second, the results of this study showed that the use of L1 during peer response sessions had different effects on the interaction of individual students and groups. In the future, it may be useful for researchers to look more closely into how the use of L1 or L2 affects students. The effects of the exclusive use of either L1 or L2 could be studied. Aspects that could be examined include the nature of comments produced (e.g., quality of comments, strategies used in responding to texts), the nature of communication (e.g., effectiveness in communication, sociolinguistic aspects of communication, amount of participation), the atmosphere in the group, the attitude toward participation in discussion, etc.

Third, this study showed that the use of critique sheets initially had a negative effect on group interaction in one group, but not in all the groups. Future studies could look into factors that cause such differential effects (e.g., English proficiency level). Researchers could also study the nature of group interaction when no critique sheets are used. Aspects that could be investigated include the nature of group interaction (e.g., participation patterns), quantity and quality of comments produced about texts, atmosphere in the group, students' perceptions about the effects of critique sheets, etc.

Fourth, future researcher might also look into L2 students' reaction to various approaches to responding to
writing and their effectiveness in communicating writing problems. For example, do students appreciate descriptive (e.g., questioning, mirroring) or prescriptive (e.g., making suggestions) responses more? Which approaches are more effective?

Fifth, this study showed that EFL students might have less motivation to speak when they had to use English to express themselves. Future researchers may therefore want to consider using students' first language when interviewing them. This may produce considerably richer data.
Appendix A

Guidelines for Peer Response Sessions

Procedures

1. Be committed to your group and have your critique sheets ready.

2. Ten minutes is allowed for each draft. You will have five minutes to write the after-session critique sheet after the discussion.

3. The leader decides the order in which the drafts are discussed. He or she should make sure that every draft gets about the same amount of time and that everyone gets to talk. Do not argue in a negative way or dominate the discussion. Notetaking is encouraged.

4. When receiving comments, remember to show appreciation. You can ask or answer questions, invite comments, or clarify ideas.

5. When responding to writing, mention both the strengths and weaknesses. Be sincere in your attitude and then do not apologize for your comments. Your role is to help your peers deal with their writing problems, instead of evaluating their writing.

6. On the after-session critique sheets, put down new insights that you gain during the discussion. These insights could include how you feel about the piece of writing now, any changes in your analysis of it, any new problems you can see, any suggestions you wish to make, etc.
Suggestions for writing critique sheets

1. First consider questions in the first four sections listed below. In a first draft the author is still trying to discover ideas and figure out ways to present them. So help the author explore the topic and present the ideas. Or point out your problems in understanding the text. After you finish this, you may consider the question in the last section.

2. When you discuss a problem, explain what makes you think it is a problem. Suggestions are optional, because you may not know how to fix the problem, or you may want the author to solve her own problem. Remember the author decides what to do with the problem. Your job is to provide honest opinions which will allow her to see the effects of her writing. Try to give your reaction when reading the text and what led to the judgement you made. Be specific and thorough.

Questions to consider when responding

1. Reasons and support.
   a. What are the main points of the writing?
   b. Take each point in turn and ask these questions:
      (1) What support or evidence is given for it?
      (2) What support could be given, besides what has been given?
      (3) What counter argument or attacks could be made against this reason?
2. **Audience.**
   a. Consider the knowledge the audience has regarding the topic. Did the writer give enough information to help the audience understand?
   b. Consider the attitudes and values of the audience. Will the audience accept the claims made and the evidence given to support the claims?
   c. Can the audience interpret the text in any other ways?

3. **Clarity.**
   Are words, phrases, and sentences clear?

4. **Organization.**
   a. Is the whole text unified?
   b. Are the parts arranged in a coherent or logical sequence?
   c. Is there a beginning, a middle, and an ending?
   d. Are the paragraphs really paragraphs? Can you tell what the point of each one is?

5. **Language.**
   Are there mistakes in grammar, word usage, spelling, punctuation, etc.?
Appendix B

Questions to Consider When Responding to a Definition Essay

Consider the following questions when you respond to a definition essay.

1. Is the subject narrowed to manageable size, and is the purpose of the definition clear to the readers?
2. Are all the words and parts of the definition itself clear to the essay's particular audience?
3. Are there enough explanatory methods (examples, descriptions, causes, effects, etc.) used to make the definition clear and convincing?
4. Have the various methods been organized and ordered in an effective way?
5. Does the essay contain enough specific details to make the definition clear and distinct rather than vague or circular? Where could additional details be added?
Appendix C

Sho-Li's Peer Critique Sheet

Assignment No. 7, Reader: Sho-Li, Writer: An-Lin

Before Peer Response

Comments:

1. I think the short story in your introduction is not very suitable. Maybe it will be better to be changed a little bit.

2. I like your body of article. It's very clear to describe the situation of modern women. but there are some ideas make me confused because they are not the same as your conclusion. Would you explain them.

3. In your conclusion, I don't think it's good to add your last sentence.

After Peer Response

Views that remain the same (Give the numbers.)

Comments 1, 2, 3

Views that have changed (Give the numbers and state your new opinions.)

Comment __:

Comment __:

Comment __:

New views (State your new opinions.)

Comment 1: The content is too broad.

Comment 2: No new information.
Appendix D

An-Lin’s Film Review

Teacher’s prompt: Write a film review about a movie you have much to say about, either positive or negative. You are going to send this review to a school newspaper. Your purpose is to assess this movie so that your readers can decide whether they want to see this movie. Think about the readers’ backgrounds, values, tastes, etc., when you write. The originality of your ideas is very important.

First draft

Dances with Wolves

It was not the only movie which described Indians. However, it was one of the few movies which was on the side of Indians. Most movies, especially the west movies, described Indians as cruel and uncivilized barbarians. But in this movie, we saw the director tried to express the things from Indians’ points of view.

This movie was directed and played by Kevin Costner. The movie was expressing Kevin Costner’s ideals. He wanted to show his different point of view. He did not think the Indians as most movies. I was deeply moved for that he hired an Indian translater to teach those actors to speak real Indian language. And when the movie was played, he insisted that the movie should be played in Indian language instead translating in English to show the real spirit of the movie. he preferred to give up (box office), though he
won after all. This movie won the Academic Oscard Prize, and he won the best director prize. Besides the movie attracted a lot of audience. People changed their points of view of Indian and American started to review their attitude to Indians. Of course, Kevin Costner won the fame and wealth.

This movie made me think of the original inhabitants in Taiwan. Their condition is similar with Indians in America. The original inhabitants are not respected in our society. We often think them as uncivilized people. Maybe they actually are. But when we criticize them, do we ever review that did we help them? We forced them to give up their houses and move to the mountain. We did not help them and nor did we try to understand them. Now we just look down upon them. We don’t have to wait a movie to remind us. From this movie, we have seen that everything has two side. When we thought that Indians was uncivilized barbarians, maybe they thought us, those civilized people, as the biggest lier.

**Second draft**

**Film Critique of Dances with Wolves**

In this movie, what we saw was very magnificent. Endless meadow, real wild scenery, and large numbers of buffalos. After such a long time of seeing so many movies produced in Hollywood, I was very surprised that there should be some one who would like to shoot a film in this
way. The commonest scene in most movies is house because it is the easiest scene. When they need some special scenes, they use visual effects. But in this movie, we saw real animals, (the horse, the wolf, and the buffalos.) and real scenery- the meadow. This movie opened and expanded the setup of movies.

We may find that the director tried to express that we can not judge people by his race. For example: About the end of this movie, we saw the actor is a white man, too. And we saw the fierce fighting between the two different races of Indians. These things were the director tries to show us. Most Americans usually think that Indians are cruel and uncivilized barbarians. Maybe some of the Indians are indeed cruel and uncivilized. but not all of them, just as not all of the white people are cruel to Indians.

This movie was directed and played by Kevin Costner. We know that this movie won several prizes in Academy Award except "The Best Leading Actor". He was not bad in that movie but her just acted as an actor. He could not let me feel the real emotion of this character. Besides, like most movies, the main actor became a hero in the movie. We could not find faults with him, but we know that no one is perfect. so the character lacks on persuasive and the sense of reality. In my opinion, the indian supporting actor's acting was much more emotional and natural than Kevin Costner.
I was really moved by that the director can pay so much time and money in one movie, especially when this kind of movie is not popular in America. He hired an Indian translator to teach all the actors and actresses to speak Indian language. He also insisted that the movie should be played in his original face. So we saw the movie in Indian language instead of in English. And since there were a lot of animals in this movie, in the end we saw a line of subtitles which said that all the movie did not hurt any animal. And the working people use anaesthetic and visual effects to shoot those hunting scenes. They were responsible for all the audience. This is also the one thing we never saw in Taiwan.

According to this movie, I think of our own problems. We also think our original inhabitants are uncivilized. But we cannot forget that not all of them are uncivilized. Some people cheated them and make use of them. Those people are worse than them, the original people have their own culture and customs what we should do is to understand them and learn to respect their culture and their way of life.
Appendix E
Sho-Li's Argumentation Essay

First draft

People Should Cohabit Before They Get Married

"You should open your eyes as big as possible when you search for your husband." a mother told to her daughter, "Take my situation as a mirror. When your father fall in love with me, how hospitable and wonderful he was! But after we got married, he changed a lot that I almost didn't know him. I have seldom seen a man so lazy and nasty like him." You may often hear some conversation like this. In according to the report, more and more couples divorce nowadays. There are many problems between these couples, and the most big is that they don't know each other deeply, and they don't really know what is marriage.

Love and marriage are both very important things in our life. Many of you already have the experience of love, and if you don't, I believe you will have it some day. But have you ever think about the relation between love and marriage? Do you think if you have great love, then you will have the same wonderful marriage? Actually, love does not contain marriage. There are too many differences and variables between love and marriage. To cohabit is a good way to experience the differences between love and marriage, and to realize what marriage is.

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We know it's very hard to know a person completely. Maybe you think that you two have already known about each other very well when you are friends. However, we have to admit that people always show their best sides when they are falling in love. Besides, most men have evil nature that they don't cherish what they already have, and women nowadays might be more interested in their jobs than families. Therefore, the best way to know more about your honey and to know his or her real personality, is to cohabit before you get married. Many people also think that cohabitation will damage the social moral. In my opinion, when you cohabit with someone, the condition must be that you want to marry him or her. In other words, you should mature enough to choose your life, then you are allowed to cohabit. In that case, cohabitation won't damage the social moral. It's better than divorce.

There are some other benefits if you cohabit before you get married. You can try to be adapted to live with your honey during that period of time. For example, you have the chance to handle your financial problems together. You have to decide who will deal with the money and whether the way is efficient or not. Besides, before you marry, you might only see your honey several times a week. But after you get married, you have to see the same person and live with him day after day and it might be boring to you. Therefore,
again I suggest that people should cohabit before they get married to avoid those problems.

At the end I have to warn you that if you get a wrong marriage, then you only have two choices: one is to divorce and another is to suffer in your rest life. If you prefer to divorce, you have to spend a lot of time and thought to recover and even you finally do it well, you still waste many years already. But if you cohabit before you get married, even you choose the wrong person, you can easily to find your new lover because you are not a person that have divorced before, and you can choose another person who is more suitable to you. There is another problem that if you have babies in your marriage, that would be your responsibility forever. The babies are innocent but they have to share your fault just because you make a wrong decision. But if you cohabit before you get married, you can have a safe sex life and the other problems above would be easier to avoid or solve. The most important thing is that you can find your best sweetheart by this way.

Second draft

People Should Have Trial Marriage Before They Get Married

"You should open your eyes as big as possible when you search for your husband." a mother told to her daughter, "Take my situation as a mirror. When your father fall in love with me, how hospitable and wonderful he was! But after we got married, he changed a lot that I almost didn't
know him. I have seldom seen a man so lazy and nasty like him." You may often hear some conversation like this. According to the report, more and more couples divorce nowadays. There are many problems between these couples, and the baggiest one is that they don't know each other deeply, and they don't really know what is marriage. Trial marriage can solve this problem.

Love and marriage are both very important things in our life. Many of you already have the experience of love, and if you don't, I believe you will have it some day. But have you ever think about the relation between love and marriage? Do you think if you have great love, then you will have the same wonderful marriage? Actually, love does not promise marriage. There are too many differences and variables between love and marriage. Trial marriage is a good way to experience the differences between love and marriage, and to realize what kind of life you will have after you marry. Some modern people support trial marriage now. And it is a hot topic we are discussing. In my opinion, we should have trial marriage before we get married. The definition of trial marriage is that when a woman and a man decide to get married, they live together in advance for adapting the life of marriage, and we call this way "trial marriage". Now I want to talk about it from three aspects:

Some people think that when you marry someone, that means you know him very well when you are friends, and you
know that you two can get along with each other well when you live together so that having trial marriage is not necessary. However, we know it's very hard to know a person completely. We have to admit that people always show their best sides when they are falling in love. Besides, most men have evil nature that they don't cherish what they already have, and women nowadays might be more interested in their jobs than families. Therefore, the best way to know more about your honey and to know his or her real personality, is having trial marriage before you get married. Many people also think that Trial marriage will damage the social moral. They think that marriage is holly, and we should not play it as a game. Having trial marriage seems like "easy love, easy go". If you really want to marry someone, why do you need trail marriage? In my opinion, when you have trial marriage with someone, the condition must be that you are going to marry him or her. In other words, you should mature enough then you are allowed to have trial marriage. In that case, trial marriage doesn't mean that you have chance to run away from your lover when you feel that he or she is not good enough. It means that you can have chance to understand him, accept him, find some ways solving the problems between you and still have your own life at the same time. We know that it is not good to us to change too much during few time because we might not be used to our new life and we should have many problems.
Trial marriage renders us the time in which we can get used to our new life. Besides, since that more and more lovers cohabit and couples divorce and we can not stop it. We just be used to it. Then, why can’t you accept "trial marriage"?

There are still resist trial marriage because they think you are just allowed to have sexual relationship with your husband or wife. But if you have trial marriage, you would have sex with your lover and that is not allowed. I also agree with their opinion that we should only sexual relationship with our husband or wife. But we should know that many couples can not get along well and divorce because they don’t have good sexual relationship. You can try out if you and your lover who you will marry can enjoy your sexual life during the time of trial marriage. If there is no problem, that is fine. But if there are some problems, try to solve them if you can. If you try so hard and even go to see the doctor but still can not have wonderful sex, then, you do need think about your marriage. Maybe you should cancel your marriage, and that would be better than you divorce after you get married.

Marriage is holly, and trial marriage is holly, too. People should not have such wrong notion that trial marriage is like cohabitation. The basic conditions of trial marriage are love, patience, and sincere. The meaning of it is to have the best marriage in your life.
Appendix F

Questionnaire on Language Use at Peer Response Sessions

1. During peer response sessions, what language do you usually use?
   ___Chinese, ___English

2. Which language do you prefer?
   ___Chinese, ___English, ___Both

3. What is the difference between using Chinese and using English for group discussion? You may talk about the difference in atmosphere, success in communication, your desire to speak, etc.
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