TEACHER CHANGE IN THE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE
OF RESPONDING TO ESL STUDENT WRITING

By

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Abstract

This study documents the changes in knowledge and practice that participants made while taking a graduate course in the teaching of ESL writing in Puerto Rico. The participants responded to and corrected an anonymous ESL essay at two points to show ways they provided feedback before and after taking the course. Other instruments used to document change in knowledge included questionnaires, class observations, and interviews. Results showed that the participants made fewer grammatical corrections to the ESL essay after taking the course. Their views on important aspects they focus on when responding to student writing also changed slightly after taking the class. Articles, class discussions on error correction and feedback, among other factors, influenced the participants to make these changes. Results point to the need for practice in courses in order for graduate students to make changes in the way they correct and respond to ESL writing.

Resumen

Este estudio documenta los cambios en conocimiento y práctica que los participantes realizaron mientras tomaban un curso graduado en la enseñanza de la escritura en inglés como segundo idioma (ESL) en Puerto Rico. Los participantes respondieron y corrigieron un ensayo en ESL para demostrar las maneras en que proveen retroalimentación antes y después de tomar el curso. Los resultados demostraron que los participantes hicieron menos correcciones gramaticales al ensayo luego de tomar el curso. Sus opiniones sobre aspectos importantes que se centran al responder a la escritura del estudiante también cambiaron levemente después de tomar el curso. Los artículos, las discusiones en clase acerca de la corrección de errores y la retroalimentación, entre otros, influenciaron a los participantes a realizar estos cambios. Los resultados demuestran la necesidad de la práctica para que los estudiantes puedan reflejar cambios en la manera en que corrigen y responden a la escritura en ESL.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis study to my family. To David, my husband, who always believed in me. To Samantha, my daughter, the light of my eyes, I have done this all for you. To my parents, Antonia and Hector, for giving me life, supporting me through all of this, and especially for baby-sitting on those late nights when I had class. To my sister Norma, the wind beneath my wings, thank you for being there. To my brother Eddie, my scholarship, I couldn't have done it without you. In other words, thank you all and I love you.

I would like to take this opportunity to remember two of my good friends and classmates, Damaris and Clarita. For Damaris, I have one word… prioritize! And for Clarita, may you rest in peace. God bless you both.

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Finally, I would like to thank the students of English 6030 who participated in this study. Without them, this project would not have been possible. Good luck in your own graduate studies.

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Chapter I Introduction

Today graduate programs in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and English Education offer numerous courses in the teaching of ESL composition. The integration of these courses is relatively new given that the field of composition has come to be known as a 'field of study' in just the last thirty years (North, 1987). The purpose of these courses is to show graduate students who will be teachers the history and methods of composition and to give them practice with the types of writing they will teach their own students how to do. They must also learn teaching techniques that they will use to respond to and correct their students' writing. Because composition studies are using new methods and new theoretical approaches, it is important to understand how graduate students perceive these approaches and, ultimately, use them when they begin to teach.

Composition theory and practice changed radically in the 1960s, a time that many theorists see as the birth of composition studies as we know it today (North, 1987). From the early 20th century to the 1960's composition instruction was based on an educational philosophy of reading and analyzing literature. Students read certain pieces of literature and then analyzed them in written compositions. Because the focus of these written compositions was on the interpretation of literary texts, little time was spent teaching how to write these compositions (Squire & Applebee, 1968; Kroll, 1991). Students were simply expected to master written genres, for example, comparison/contrast, narration, description, to name a few. The teacher would evaluate the students' written work, perhaps correct and/or comment on it, and return it with a final grade without ever expecting any form of revision before starting all over again with another piece of literary text. This process in United States English language education is known

by some as "the traditional paradigm" (Hairston, 1982) to others as the "product approach" (Kroll, 1991), and the current traditional approach to writing (Burnham, 2001).

In the first half of the 1980's a new paradigm, the "process approach," emerged where the focus on writing was on revision and teacher feedback through multiple drafts rather than on the final draft (Burnham, 2001; Ferris, 2003). Along with the use of multiple drafts, teachers had more opportunity to respond to student writing at different stages, thus giving more time to the process of writing rather than the finished product. Students could use the comments of their teachers and peers to revise and create a better piece of writing. For ESL students, the process approach offered them a chance to rewrite their essays, focusing on both language development and writing.

Feedback, also known as response to writing, can include various types of written comments such as those that teachers and/or peers write in the margins or at the end of an essay. It may also include the correction of grammatical errors. Sometimes teachers respond through oral interactions such as teacher-student conferences or through an online medium.

How teachers respond to student writing has been a topic of great interest and much research in ESL and native language writing. Sommers (2006), explains that "there is so much scholarly attention paid to it that if you search 'responding to student writing' on Google you will arrive in 2.7 seconds at the first of about 230,000 entries" (p. 250). One of the purposes of a graduate writing course is to teach future teachers the techniques of responding to writing. One can see its importance for instruction, for example, in the textbook *Teaching ESL Composition* by Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) where the authors dedicate two chapters to responding to writing and error correction. In addition, Ferris (2003) has dedicated an entire book to the issue of response to student writing.

Research shows that teachers, especially those in an ESL context, need to learn the different techniques for responding to students' writing. Sometimes teachers are vague with their corrections and/or comments and students do not know how to handle them. Providing the wrong feedback can confuse ESL students even more and perhaps inhibit them from doing any revision at all (Ferris, 2003; Zamel, 1985). Students sometimes have to face teachers who take over or "appropriate" their writing and make so many changes to it that it no longer looks like their own (Reid, 1994). Courses in the teaching of composition are therefore, valuable in helping teachers look at and respond to their students' writing in different ways. These classes can help a teacher break the cycle that so many believe is true: that teachers "tend to teach as they were taught" (McLeod, 2001). A writing course, which focuses on the study of research and theory of ESL writing and practice in its techniques, may help a teacher to break this cycle. This is extremely important in Puerto Rico where most of the writing teachers are ESL and English is not their primary language. These teachers may have been taught that good writing primarily requires the elimination of grammatical errors and that correcting all the errors will result in a good paper. My personal experience illustrates that correcting all grammatical errors can have positive effects.

A few years ago, I enrolled in English 6030 as part of my MAEE studies. At the time, I was teaching English to a group of sixth grade students in a bilingual school. Before taking English 6030, I focused all of my corrections and feedback on grammar when I responded to my students' writing assignments. By reading and discussing articles and books in class throughout the semester and practicing how to respond to writing, I had to put into practice my newly found knowledge. Consequently, I learned to focus my feedback on other areas of writing that needed just as much attention as grammar. Because of this experience, I wondered if other students that

take English 6030 go through the same transformation that I did. This idea was the motivation behind this thesis study.

The University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez offers a Masters of Arts in English Education (MAEE) to train teachers in all areas of English, including teaching ESL methods, linguistics, literature, and composition. Specifically the program offers two courses in the teaching of composition. The first, *Theory and Practice of Composition*, introduces students to composition theories and shows them how they relate to their practice. The second course, *Practice of Composition*, helps students develop writing materials and activities to use in their classroom. This thesis concerns itself only with the first of the two classes.

This study examined if and how graduate students who are teachers and teaching assistants in the MAEE program at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez changed their perceptions about teaching writing and the ways they responded to writing after taking English 6030, Theory and Practice of Composition. It also considered the aspects of the course that helped make these changes.

Research Questions

The objective of this thesis was to examine the ways that teachers taking Theory and Practice of Composition at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez view themselves as teachers of writing and how they view students' texts, before and after taking a graduate methods course in how to teach writing. Teacher attitudes and beliefs about how to correct student papers often stem from a belief system about writing and how to teach it: teachers tend to teach as they were taught. In addition, in an ESL context, where language is the focus, teachers tend to concentrate more on error correction, which may be as detrimental as it is helpful (Truscott,

1996; Ferris, 2003). Teachers' views about writing should show some change after taking a semester graduate course in writing. Therefore, this study has two research questions:

1. In what ways do the participants' views on responding to writing change after completing English 6030: Theory and Practice of Composition?

2. What aspects of English 6030 helped the participants in the changes in teacher feedback?

Chapter II Previous Research

Research from native language composition studies showed that not so many years ago, and possibly still today, a student would write a paper and a teacher would return it with a grade; there would be errors marked in red, and maybe there would be a comment on what the student did. The process would begin again when the student wrote a new paper (Hairston, 1982). Teachers hoped that sooner or later the student would catch on and avoid such mistakes in the future. Research has found that this form of feedback did not help students improve their writing (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981; Sommers, 1982). These researchers found the feedback caused more problems, tended to be more negative than positive, and were mostly prescriptive. Despite these results, they found that the best way to improve student writing was to provide the feedback in preliminary and intermediate, rather than final drafts. Since that time response to student writing has become a major research area in composition (Sommers, 2006).

Like studies in native language composition, second language learners who are learning to write must also contend with similar issues. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) divide the empirical research on feedback to second language (L2) writing "into three major categories: (a) descriptive studies of what teachers actually do when responding to writing, (b) research on long and short term effects of response, (c) surveys of student opinions about reactions to instructor feedback" (p.186). There is little or no research on how teachers learn to respond to L2 writing from taking a course in a graduate program. Because the amount of research in the broader field is so vast, this review covers a sample of studies in the areas described by Ferris and Hedgcock for the L2 context and also gives some mention to error correction as feedback because teachers in Puerto Rico have to contend with issues of language as well as writing.

Descriptive Studies of Teacher Response

The first group of studies looks at what teachers do when they respond to writing. In her study on native language teacher feedback, Sperling (1994) examined all the comments provided by the teacher on assignments written by her eight students. These comments were classified into five different orientations that at the same time, worked together to form the teacher's perspective. These five orientations, (a) interpretive, (b) social, (c) cognitive/emotive, (d) evaluative, and (e) pedagogical, were important to building a framework for thinking about the perspective teachers bring to reading students' writing. She found the comments the teacher wrote depended on the individual student and the different types of texts they were writing.

Ihde (1994) conducted a survey of 50 American and French teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to discover the ways these teachers provided feedback. The participants reported they used different techniques to indicate errors in their students' writing, such as circling, correction codes, and direct correction of errors. Few participants reported conferencing with the student in order to discuss major error patterns. Finally, most of the participants reported they required their students to rewrite their papers.

According to Sommers (1980) there are three reasons for teachers to respond to student writing:

1. to let students know if their writing is conveying the message they have intended,

2. to let students know what their readers might question or not fully understand about their writing so they may make the necessary improvements, and

3. to give students a reason to actually revise their writing because without the feedback, students would probably revise, barely, or not at all.

With these purposes for responding to texts in mind, a number of problems arise from them (Sommers, 1982). For example, the comments made on student essays made the students refocus their efforts from their purposes for writing to their teachers' purpose in commenting (p.149). Another problem is that teachers gave vague comments that are not related specifically to the text of the student but can be 'rubber stamped' on any composition (p.152) not helping the student writer to see his/her specific problems. Zamel (1985), who conducted a study with ESL writers, also found that teachers made the same types of responses to the texts of English as a Second Language writers (ESL), compounding the problem for them because they have problems with language and writing.

Effective response

The second group of studies considers the effects of responding to student writing. Teachers have always questioned what kind of feedback or error correction would be more productive when correcting their students' writing. Cardelle and Corno (1981) in a native language context (L1) concluded from their study that providing positive feedback by itself was not motivating enough for the students to produce any improvements and that providing only criticism by itself led some students to improve, but the most improvement was observed when criticism and praise were combined. In a similar study, Fatham and Whalley (1990) found that students with feedback on their content only and students with feedback on both grammar and content demonstrated better improvements in their subsequent drafts than students with feedback on their grammar only or no feedback at all. The group that received no feedback at all actually produced longer rewrites, meaning that perhaps teacher feedback may affect quantity instead of quality when students revise and rewrite their papers.

Kepner (1991), in her study of responses to out-of-class journal entries, concluded that "written error corrections combined with explicit rule reminders" did not really help the students improve their writing. She did find, however, that "message-related comments" did help the students improve their writing and promote critical thinking (p. 310).

Ferris (1997) conducted a study in which she observed the relationship between teacher comments and changes made in students' revised drafts. She found several things: 1) many of the comments teachers made on the first drafts influenced the students to make some sort of revision, 2) positive comments led to no changes while other comments, such as requests for information, led students to make negative effects on revised papers, and 3) while some students paid attention to teacher feedback and make the necessary revisions, others chose to ignore some suggestions given by their teacher.

A study by Beason (1993) showed that students did pay attention to the comments and corrections that their teachers made, which can only mean that students do believe their teachers' feedback *will* help them improve. As a result of these studies, both teachers and students can agree that teacher feedback to student writing is essential (Ferris and Hedgcock, 1998). Because of this, teachers might change their way of responding to student writing by correcting and/or commenting on ideas and organization on first drafts, leaving grammar and usage for later drafts. However, other studies show that content and form can be used together (Ashwell, 2000).

Researchers have not been able to completely demonstrate that correcting errors directly helps students in any way (Truscott, 1996, 1999). They suggest using error correction that allows students to realize the mistakes they have made and enable them to correct them themselves. Cumming (1985), Kassen (1988), and Ihde (1994) have individually conducted studies on

teacher response to student writing and have found that most teachers focused more on surface errors rather than content and organization.

Some researchers have questioned the effectiveness of all this feedback and have conducted studies in order to discover the usefulness of the feedback. For example, Garcia (2003) compared two methods of correcting student writing, error correction and reformulation, in order to find out which of these forms of feedback helped ESL writers to notice their errors more. Error correction refers to the correction of grammatical errors to help students improve their writing. Reformulation refers to the reconstruction of written text in order to eliminate grammatical errors so that the text would seem as close as possible to the target language. In her study, Garcia found that error correction is the feedback type that promotes the most noticing among ESL writers. Her results indicated that error correction provides more opportunities for learners to notice their errors.

While some studies demonstrate the importance of error correction as part as feedback, others show feedback to be quite ineffective. Knoblauch and Brannon (1981) concluded that commenting on student essays was useless. Students either did not read the comments, or read them but did not do anything to implement them or correct the mistakes they had made. Despite these conclusions, other studies have shown that students revised and wrote better papers when teachers responded to their preliminary drafts (Freedman, 1987; Hillocks, 1986; Knoblauch and Brannon, 1981; Moxley, 1989; Sommers, 1982).

In a few studies on L2 student writing (Cumming, 1985; Reid, 1994; Zamel, 1985) researchers found that some ESL writing teachers considered themselves to be language teachers, rather than writing teachers. Therefore, when responding to their students' writing, they tended to focus their feedback more on language errors instead of the ideas or the organization of

the text, reacting to the text at the sentence-level instead of focusing their efforts on the text as a whole. This could be due to the lack of training or to the fact that they were trained as language teachers and not as writing teachers.

Surveys of Student Opinions and Reactions to Instructor Feedback

Because the research on response to L2 writing has not been conclusive as to the effects of teacher response and error correction, some studies have investigated student reactions to teacher response. These researchers have used questionnaires to find out how L2 students react to different types of teacher feedback to their writing. Leki (1990a) found that some students didn't pay any attention to their teacher's feedback. Some had problems actually understanding the feedback itself, and some had feelings of hostility towards their teacher because they took over the students' writing.

Cohen (1987) reported 20 percent of the participants in his study did not pay attention to their teachers' suggestions and had to use other strategies to understand their teachers' feedback. Ferris (1995) found similar results in her study, adding that the students thought feedback on content and organization was more important, especially in earlier drafts.

Another study by Leki (1990b) and one by Radecki and Swales (1988) found students preferred their teachers to focus more on grammar than on content. However, Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1994) and Ferris (1995) found that L2 students preferred teacher feedback on ideas and organization on earlier drafts and on grammar in later drafts.

In summary, these three areas show what Ferris and Hedgcock described earlier as the major areas of research on feedback. However, there are other areas that need to be discussed that are related to providing feedback to student writing.

Suggestions for Providing Feedback to Student Writing

It is clear that L2 teacher response to student writing needs to address all aspects of the text, including organization, grammar, style, mechanics, and content, although not necessarily all in the same draft or on every draft. Because students are still organizing their ideas on earlier drafts, it is suggested that teachers' feedback be directed at helping the student in these areas but in different orders. Focusing on word- or sentence-level errors should be addressed later in subsequent drafts, unless consistent errors do not allow the reader to understand the message the writer is trying to convey. On later drafts, students should be encouraged to correct their own papers (Ferris, 1998).

Bates, et al (1993) suggest four general guidelines to respond to the content in L2 student writing: 1) write personalized comments such as "I like this example, John" or "I'm confused by what you are trying to say here"; 2) provide guidance or direction, for example asking students questions that will make them think; 3) make text-specific comments, for example, "I liked the example about your sister"; and 4) provide a balance between positive and negative comments. Studies have shown that although students remember and appreciate positive feedback made by their teachers (Cardelle and Corno, 1981; Ferris, 1995; Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1994), giving too much positive feedback can actually discourage students from revising (Cardelle and Corno, 1981).

According to the research it seems that there is not a specific location on students' papers for teachers' comments. These can be in the margins and/or at the end of the written text. Research has not been able to present any evidence that shows that either marginal or terminal comments are more effective (Knoblauch and Brannon, 1981; Leki, 1990). Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) suggest the use of terminal comments when the lack of time or the number of papers is an

influential factor. Otherwise, they recommend a combination of marginal and terminal comments so the teacher may pinpoint where changes are needed and provide additional commentary at the end. Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) also suggest going over the paper once first without writing anything on it, then a second time, paying attention to content and organization. Next, they suggest writing an end note that focuses on the most important issues. Finally, they recommend going back over the text to add marginal comments to point out specific points addressed in the end note.

Techniques for Providing Feedback to Student Writing

As more teachers learn how to respond to their students' writing, more techniques become available to them to provide their students with the necessary feedback. Such techniques include audio-taped oral feedback, comments added to the typed text in a student's file, and/or comments sent through the internet via email. For some students, who process feedback better orally, the audio-taped oral feedback may be very helpful. On the other hand, for some students, this kind of feedback is confusing, particularly if they have difficulty processing information orally. Feedback given via computer eliminates the problem of poor handwriting, which can be confusing for the reader. The biggest problem with these newer techniques for teacher feedback and student writing is availability. Unfortunately, the instruments used such as recorders, computers, and access to the internet, are not always available to all students and this can pose a problem. In addition, some teachers might just find it easier to work with the traditional pencil and paper that he/she can carry anywhere and work with wherever and whenever they can (Ferris, 2003).

As far as handwritten feedback is concerned, there are many different points to consider. Do teachers use a separate sheet to respond or do they write directly on the student's paper? If

they use a separate sheet, do they use a generic checklist or rubric or do they write verbal comments? Research findings have not presented any evidence that one form of feedback is more effective than the other (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994). Checklists and rubrics can be presented to the students before the assignment so that they will know what the teacher will be looking for in their paper. However, in a study by Ferris (1997), a teacher stopped writing end notes on the students' papers and used a response sheet instead. Because of this, she wrote fewer and shorter comments, which shows how this form of feedback may inhibit the teacher from writing other comments.

Another form of providing feedback to student writing is by holding one-to-one conferences with the student after the teacher has read the assignment. Over time, this form of feedback has become popular for a number of reasons. For teachers, it saves time on having to correct so many student papers by hand. For students who receive and understand information better when presented orally, this form of feedback is very helpful. For both teachers and students, one-to-one conferences provide a back and forth immediate interaction that written comments do not provide. Both participants can ask for on-the-spot clarification of ideas or comments made. Jacobs and Karliner (1977) found in their study that one-to-one conferences with students, especially low-achieving students, led to progress in subsequent drafts.

As with every situation, there are positive and negative aspects to consider. As mentioned before, teacher-student conferences can be very beneficial for both parties involved. Some researchers, including Murray (1985), suggest that students should be allowed to take the lead in these one-to-one conferences. The students should be able to respond to their own writing before the teacher offers his/her feedback or evaluation. On the other hand, many researchers feel this is only giving the students a feeling of empowerment over their writing, therefore putting them into

a position they are not prepared for (Silva, 1997). Another problem is that some students may view their teachers as such an authority figure that they dare not question or argue with their teacher under any circumstances because they believe their teachers' comments come from superior knowledge. Yet another problem is that some students may not want to hold conferences with their teachers for a number of reasons: 1) they might feel intimidated, 2) they might prefer their feedback in writing, and 3) they might forget what they discussed with the teacher (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998). Either way, the best thing for the teacher to do is ask their students at the beginning of the class how they would prefer their feedback.

For those students who prefer having conferences with their teachers, the next question to consider is when, where, and how often. Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) suggest a variety of options from 1) every week or every class session where the students come up to the teacher during the class, 2) at regular intervals, every number of weeks at the teacher's office, 3) having the students come to the office at least once during the semester, or 4) leaving the decision completely up to the student. All in all, studies have concluded that these one-to-one conferences between teachers and students are most successful when the student actively participates in the conference instead of simply receiving criticism and advice from the teacher without any input from the student. These kinds of conferences produce texts that are student-owned and developed rather than mere reflections of teacher feedback.

Teacher Change

Because I look at how teachers change in an MA course about how to teach writing, I included some studies related to this area. A few studies that look specifically at how teachers change in the way they teach writing are reviewed here as well as a few other studies that show

teacher change in professional development to show similarity in models for change across teachers.

Pennington (1994) developed a model of the changes teachers underwent in applying an innovation to their classrooms when they were introduced to process-writing. The subjects were eight MA level Chinese teachers who came from a culture that was resistant to any changes in teaching.

According to Pennington, lasting change in teaching practice is not easy to attain. She stated that the key to long-term change in teachers is awareness. That is, teachers need to see a need for change and at least a desire to experiment with available alternatives before they actually make any changes. She explained that a teacher's "awareness is also influenced by his or her experience and philosophy of teaching that act as a psychological barrier or filtering mechanism" (p.705). Pennington also stated that when exposed to different alternatives to their teaching, "some alternatives may be noticed and assimilated, while others are not" (p. 706).

Pennington referred to lasting teacher change in general terms and explains that, "in all types of professional practice lasting change in teacher behavior occurs as a result of trying something new, reflecting on its consequences and trying with alteration as needed" (p. 706). For Pennington, the development of professionals occurs in cycles of performance by sequences of innovate-reflect-adjust moves through which something is tried and considered until it is gradually incorporated into practice. Considering the work of Pennington, it appears that lasting change in teacher behavior occurs only when teachers are able and motivated to try something new, to reflect on its consequences, and then adjust their practice.

In another study directly related to writing teachers, Winer (1992) used data from student journals to document changes that student teachers made in their awareness and attitude toward

writing and the teaching of writing. The researcher found five strategies helpful in changing pre-service teachers' negative attitudes toward teaching writing. These strategies included having them design writing tasks and then actually do them, requiring revision tasks and responses, guiding peer coaching, providing guided practice in topic development, and helping student teachers analyze and understand the writing process through journals. Student teachers documented their changes in reports found in their journal entries.

Although not related directly to teacher change, this next study looked at what criteria raters use when evaluating compositions. Cumming, Kantor, and Powers (2002) described the results of three related exploratory studies about the decisions that experienced raters of compositions make when evaluating essays by ESL writers. The authors developed a framework for the types of decisions the raters make and found that raters attend more to rhetoric and ideas with compositions that were rated high and attended more to language issues such as grammar when essays were rated lower. Participants said that their previous experiences rating compositions and teaching English had influenced their criteria and their processes for rating compositions. This indicates that a teacher rating a composition might also attend more to language and grammar issues with lower level students than with students at higher levels and shows an area where teacher change might occur after training.

In a book by Lester and Onore (1990) the authors presented a report about how, through in-service training, they tried to establish a Writing Across the Curriculum program. The authors discussed how teachers' beliefs affect how they integrated and tried out new ideas in their teaching. They say that sometimes teachers needed to un-learn previously learned information to enable themselves to accept new ideas about teaching.

Other research on teacher change comes from areas other than composition. For example, Richardson and Anders (1994) examined methodologies in staff development programs for teachers. The authors suggested moving away from traditional models of studying teacher change toward a more collaborative one. A collaborative approach is based on the idea that teachers will not necessarily acquire discrete skills, but rather awareness of their ways of thinking through interacting with new materials, ideas, and concepts. The authors gave a number of reasons for this argument. First, they saw that teachers do not change in the same ways, and also, the justifications for their beliefs are important in understanding their practices.

The authors described a collaborative process for staff development which has characteristics such as an open ended design, rich data multimodal approaches, and presentation of learner data during the development process. They used self-report data from teachers who were going through staff development to teach reading. Regarding teacher change, they stated that "new practices and procedures are adopted by teachers if they appear to work: that is, if they are consistent with teacher's beliefs concerning learning and teaching, engage the students, and allow them the degree of control felt necessary (p. 159). When teachers experiment with new activities in the classroom, the new practices are assessed on the basis of whether they work.

These reports, when taken together, show that teacher change is not easy to observe, monitor, or change. The consensus of the reports is that teachers do consider innovations and think about them, but need to have experience and practice to be able to consider making those changes.

As can be seen from the review of the literature, research on teacher response has focused on how teachers respond and problems related to their types of responses, how effective response is, and students' reactions to response. The literature, in general, does not focus on the ways that

teachers learn to give response, even though there are a number of chapters in writing textbooks that dedicate time to explaining how to respond to student writing. For example, Ferris (2003) dedicated an entire book to responding to writing. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) offer chapters on responding to student writing, grammar correction, peer review, and conferencing.

No matter what form of feedback the teacher and/or student decides to work with, whether it is some form of written or oral feedback, one thing is certain: response to student writing is a very essential part of the writing process. Although it is an individual issue that varies from teacher to teacher, from student to student, and from assignment to assignment, researchers, teachers, and students alike can agree that response to student writing is important at all levels. But even the most experienced of teachers can encounter many difficulties when providing feedback. Therefore, it is important for aspiring composition teachers to know about different methods of responding to writing, to be aware of what researchers have found regarding their effects, and to be trained in the theories of teaching writing. Like all pre and in-service teachers, the students completing their Masters of Art in English Education need to learn how to respond to writing according to their students' individual needs in an effective way that will help their students become better writers. English 6030: Theory and Practice of Composition offers this opportunity as it teaches the students about theories in teaching writing, and allows for practice of what they have learned. This study examined how the students in English 6030 changed their perceptions about teaching writing, the ways they responded to writing, and the aspects of the course that influenced them to make these changes.

Chapter III Methodology

Response to student writing has been studied in various forms, but with little attention to the processes that teachers go through in developing their knowledge about how to respond to student writing. In order to investigate the ways that teachers change their perceptions on teaching writing and the ways they respond to writing, qualitative methodology is appropriate because it is descriptive, considers the perspectives of the participants, and is concerned with processes rather than products. According to Creswell (1998), to undertake qualitative research the study should have certain characteristics. It should have a natural setting; the researcher is the key instrument in data collection, and the research focuses on the perspectives and meanings of the participants.

The case study is within the tradition of qualitative research. According to Yin (2003) case study design involves taking an in-depth look at a single instance or event: a case. This research strategy looks at these events, collects data, analyzes data, and reports the results. Based on these results, the researcher can gain a better understanding of why these events occurred and what might help future research in the area. The case in this thesis study was the course, English 6030, the students enrolled in the class, and the professor who taught the class.

This study used qualitative methodology and case study design to investigate teachers who were part of a graduate level writing course in a Master of Arts in English Education (MAEE) program at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez and it focused on the development of ideas about how to respond to student writing.

Participants

The participants in this qualitative case study included students enrolled in English 6030, a graduate course titled *Theory and Practice of Composition,* during the Fall 2006 semester.

Twelve students enrolled in this class as an elective as part of the MAEE program at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez. All twelve students offered to participate, but one student fell ill and did not complete the course. Participation in this study was completely voluntary, and participants signed a form giving their consent (Appendix A).

English 6030: *Theory and Practice of Composition*

In this course, students study the history, theories and ideologies, and current debates related to the teaching of composition. Students in the course practice their writing based on what they are currently learning in the course and learn how to apply this newly acquired information in their own classroom environments. By the end of this course, the students should become familiar with different theories of teaching writing, should be able to make better decisions related to teaching writing, and should develop as writers and as writing teachers. The syllabus for the course explains the objectives for the course and includes a semester outline that students follow throughout the semester (Appendix B).

Instruments

Questionnaire: Perceptions of Writing 1 and 2

I developed two questionnaires and administered them to the participants at two points in the semester, one at the beginning of the semester and the other at the end of the semester. The first questionnaire, Perceptions of Writing 1 (POW 1), asked the participants a) demographic questions including where they were born and raised, their first and second languages, their previous contact with writing courses, and their teaching experience, and b) open-ended questions on how they teach writing, their expectations for the course, the order of importance they give to the various aspects of an essay, and what their focus would be if they were to teach a

writing course today (Appendix C). The second questionnaire, Perceptions of Writing 2 (POW 2), included open-ended questions on whether their expectations for the course had been met, the order of importance they give various aspects of an essay, specific aspects of the class that helped them improve as writing teachers, and what their focus would be if they were to teach a writing course today (Appendix D).

Sample Student Essay

I chose an essay that had numerous errors in the areas that I wanted to cover in this thesis, such as grammar, organization, content, style, and mechanics. This Sample Student Essay (SSE) was written by an anonymous ESL student from a Basic English course offered at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez. I used the same SSE for the participants to read, correct, and/or comment on at two points in the semester, once at the beginning and again at the end of the semester (Appendix E). I examined the responses and categorized the corrections and comments that were made by the participants.

Interviews

I interviewed the professor of the course at two points in the semester, first at the beginning of the semester and again at the end of the semester. In the first interview, I asked the professor about her expectations for the course, what she planned to do during the semester to make the participants better writers and better writing teachers, what her philosophy of teaching writing was, and how she perceived the group of participants as far as the teaching of writing was concerned (Appendix F for questions). In the second interview, I asked the professor if her expectations for the course were fulfilled and how she perceived the participants after the semester was finished (Appendix G for questions).

I interviewed the participants via email. The questions I asked them focused on the background knowledge the participants had on writing and responding to student writing. I asked them how a student becomes a better writer, how their role as a teacher helps students to learn to write, what was important to them when writing a paper, what the participants' opinions on teachers responding to their written work was and how they handled the feedback, and what steps they take when teaching how to write an essay (Appendix H for questions).

Dialogic Logs

The participants wrote weekly reactions (dialogic logs) after each class as required homework assignments of the course. The purpose of these reactions was for the participants to keep a record of their thoughts and ideas on class discussions and/or the assignments they read. These weekly reactions were personalized and shared with other participants. I read each one and chose specific dialogic log entries that were related to error correction and feedback in order to observe knowledge change with regards to writing and responding to writing that may have occurred while taking English 6030 (Appendix I for example reaction).

Follow-up Interviews

I conducted a follow-up interview with selected participants who demonstrated differences between the two responses to the SSE. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain a better understanding of these differences and to discover what aspect of English 6030, if any, influenced them in making these changes. I asked the participants what they would use from the course to teach writing, how the course was valuable to them, how they planned to approach correction of their students' essays in the future and if this approach was different from their approach before they took the course. I also asked what aspects of the course helped them to

change their views on feedback, and their beliefs about whether error correction helps students'

accuracy over time. Finally, I showed them the two versions of the SSE they responded to and

asked them to elaborate on the reasons why they were different. These interviews, with the

participants' consent, were recorded for analysis as part of this study (Appendix J).

Schedule for Data Collection and Analysis of Data

At the beginning of the Fall 2006 semester, I distributed and collected POW 1 for the

participants to complete. Next, I distributed and collected the SSE for the participants to respond

to. I also interviewed the professor in order to obtain a better understanding of his/her goals for

English 6030. Finally, I sent the participants the interview questions via email.

During the Fall 2006 semester, I visited English 6030 on various dates to observe the

participants in their weekly class discussions, focusing particularly on topics such as error

correction and teacher feedback (See Appendix B for schedule on syllabus). I examined and

classified the corrections and comments made by the participants in their first response to the

SSE. I also examined and tabulated the responses from POW 1.

At the end of the Fall 2006 semester, I distributed and collected POW 2. After collecting

these questionnaires, I distributed another copy of the SSE the participants responded to at the

beginning of the semester and they responded to it again. I held the follow-up interview with the

professor. I also collected and photocopied weekly reactions the participants wrote throughout

the semester that were relevant to error correction and/or teacher feedback. I examined and

classified the corrections and comments made on the second response to the SSE. I also

examined and tabulated the responses from POW 2.

After I examined and analyzed the two sets of responses to the SSE separately, I

compared them to find any differences and/or similarities between the two to find which of the

participants demonstrated the most changes in the ways they responded to it. Four participants were selected. Then, I interviewed these four participants individually to find out why they made these changes and what aspects of English 6030 influenced them to change the way they corrected the essay.

Chapter IV Data Analysis

The analysis of the data included the first questionnaire (POW 1), the first response to the SSE, interviews with the professor and the participants, class observations, the second questionnaire (POW 2), the second response to the SSE, and the follow-up interviews conducted with the embedded case studies.

As I looked over the data, I developed categories that I interpreted as the changes that I observed in the feedback and the ways the participants responded to the SSE. I evaluated the class reactions written by the participants to interpret any changes in their way of thinking towards teacher feedback to student writing, I also compared the questionnaires from the beginning of the semester to those from the end of the semester to note whether participants reported changes toward teacher feedback to student writing. This analysis consists of making a detailed description of the twelve participants (Creswell, 1998). I examined all of these comparisons to determine changes in the way the participants viewed responding to student writing before and after having taken English 6030. I report embedded case studies of four students who provided additional in-depth views of their interpretations/perceptions of their learning experience.

Before I could answer any of my research questions, I needed to familiarize myself with the participants. Therefore, I used POW 1 obtain information about them that would give me better insight into who they were as students and as teachers.

Perceptions of Writing 1 (POW 1)

As Table 1 shows, basic demographic questions numbers one through six in POW 1 (See Appendix C) show that nine of the participants were born and raised in Puerto Rico, and

considered their first language to be Spanish and their second language to be English. All of the

participants but one were teachers. Of those participants that *were* teachers, one of them had

been a teacher for fourteen years at elementary/intermediate levels while the others ranged from

"just beginning" to three years of experience as Teaching Assistants at basic or intermediate

levels of English courses offered at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez. All of the

participants had previously taken writing courses before enrolling in English 6030.

Table 1. Demographic Information from POW 1: Questions #1 through #6   N=12

Born in:		**First Language**		**Teaching?**	
Puerto Rico	9	Spanish	8	Yes	11
United States	2	English	2	No	1
Dominican Republic	1	Cantonese	1		
		Chinese & Spanish*	1	**Graduate Student?**	
Raised in:		* = simultaneously		Yes	12
Puerto Rico	7			No	0
United States	3	**Second Language**			
Dominican Republic	1	Spanish	2	**Previous Writing Course?**	
Texas then Puerto Rico	1	English	9		
		Spanish & English*	1	Yes	12
		* = simultaneously		No	0
Years of Teaching Experience					
1 - 5 years	9				
6 – 10 years	1				
11 or more years	1				

Questions number 7, 8, and 10 in POW 1 were open-ended questions. Question number 7

asked, "Do you teach writing?" and if the participant answered yes, he/she was asked to explain

how he/she taught writing. After examining their responses, I found that the majority of these

participants offer their students some form of guidance, instruction, and/or examples of writing

or the writing process, and then, following this introduction, allow the student to write and

express themselves. A few of the participants wrote that they allow their students to write freely

and as often as possible to allow the students to express themselves openly without giving them

limits as to what is expected of them. Only two of the participants mentioned anything related to revising their students' papers themselves or through peer revision. A summary of the participants' answers can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. How the Participants Teach Writing: Question #7

Participant #	What they wrote:
1	read, construct sentences, and eventually paragraphs of 7-8 sentences using the writing process
2	writing processes and mechanics
	lets them know what is important is their idea and original thought
	opinions, position, and reader
3	"impossible to be brief"
4	"We learn grammar to help develop ideas in sentence structure"
5	free writing
6	teaches the methods of development and other techniques
	allows students to express themselves through writing then focus on how they can make it better
7	DOES NOT TEACH
8	gives general instructions, then allows students to write, then they receive peer and teacher feedback
9	gives examples of essays and short stories
	then asks them to write as frequently as possible for practice
10	teaches basic methods and guidelines
	allows students to practice and experiment with their writing

Table 2. How the Participants Teach Writing: Question #7

Participant #	What they wrote:
11	DOES NOT TEACH WRITING
12	gets the students to produce ideas then develop them
	reading and presenting some structures

Question number 8 in POW 1 asked the participants what they expected to learn in English 6030. Some of the participants wanted to use this class to improve their own writing skills and become better writers, but the majority of the participants wanted to learn more about writing theories, processes, and techniques in order to become better writing teachers so that they in turn can help their students become better writers. A list of these expectations can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Expectations for English 6030 Course: Question #8

Participant #	What they wrote:
1	update my teaching on composition and improve my own writing
2	learn to diagnose the problem ESL students are having and how to approach them
	learn specific strategies in dealing with students' needs
3	to be a better writer
4	how to introduce, develop, and engage writing in a classroom
5	learn different views on teaching and learning composition
	to become a better teacher
6	be more aware of the writing process and how as a teacher to introduce her students to it and allow them to develop their skills

Table 3. Expectations for English 6030 Course: Question #8

Participant #	What they wrote:
7	understand better the writing process
	to become a better writer
	understand the study of writing and how it affects students and teachers
8	be more aware of the difficulties students face when writing
9	learn better methods of teaching writing composition and help define my own teaching philosophy
10	learn about the ideologies of writing and teaching of writing
	learn about my own writing
11	learning techniques on how to come up with innovative writing tasks for my students to make their writing experiences more entertaining
12	theory behind writing

Question number 9 in POW 1 asked the participants to place a number in front of the following five items to show the order of importance they give each one when responding to their students' writing assignments: organization, grammar, style, mechanics, and content. The majority of the participants placed content as the most important of the selections, followed by organization, style, grammar, and finally mechanics, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Order of Importance from POW 1: Question #9

N = 12	Content	Organization	Style	Grammar	Mechanics
Most important	**83%**	8%	8%	0%	0%
	8%	**67%**	17%	8%	0%
	8%	25%	**42%**	25%	0%
	0%	0%	8%	**42%**	50%
Least important	0%	0%	25%	25%	**50%**

Question number 10 in POW 1 asked the participants what their focus would be if they were to teach a writing course today. The answers the participants gave were expressed in different ways, but the majority of them conveyed strong feelings towards having their students focus primarily on communicating freely their personal yet organized ideas. The participants want their students to eliminate the fear they might have when writing, and gain confidence in themselves as writers. Many participants mentioned focusing on the importance of other aspects of writing such as content and organization, followed by style, grammar, and error correction. See Table 5 for a detailed summary of the answers the participants provided.

Table 5. Focus of Writing Course from POW 1: Question #10

Participant #	What they wrote:
1	content
	to communicate freely
2	at first organization, grammar and mechanics
	then content and original thought
3	critical thinking
	discourse community
	what makes a good paper
	practice
4	express ideas on paper
	start with an idea for a topic
	then develop the process
	organization, grammar, style, mechanics, content
5	practice and gaining confidence

Table 5. Focus of Writing Course from POW 1: Question #10

Participant #	What they wrote:
	freedom and encouragement
	praising and correction
6	focus on what they have and how to develop it
	then mechanics
7	organize their ideas
	main idea and content
	style
	grammar
8	content and organization
9	topics that interest the students
	peer review
	focus on what needs work, not correct the paper
10	putting ideas on paper
	organization
	grammar and mechanics
11	eliminate the fear of writing
	revision
12	express themselves
	develop and organize ideas

Sample Student Essay (SSE): First Response

In order to answer my first research question, "In what ways do the participants' views on feedback to writing change after completing the [English 6030] course?", I needed to administer the Sample Student Essay (SSE) described in Chapter 3 at two points in the semester in order to observe any differences and/or similarities that could demonstrate some form of change in the way the participants provided feedback to their students.

Therefore, at the beginning of the semester, I provided the participants with the SSE (See Appendix E) and told them that their instructions were to respond to it as if it were written by a student of theirs. They should provide the student with whatever they thought was necessary to write a better second draft. Although the participants responded to the essay in many different ways, most of the participants focused on grammar errors including subject/verb agreement, singular/plural form of nouns, and verb tense. Many participants added, deleted, or changed words to correct the essay. For example, participant number 5 added the word "they" in the following part of the first sentence of the SSE: "…but many people think that [they] are very dangerous…" Very little attention was given to punctuation and capitalization. A summary of these corrections can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6: Focus of Corrections from SSE (First Response)

Participant #	Focus of corrections	# of times
1	grammar	11
	added words	1
	punctuation	4
	capitalization	1
	indentation	1

Table 6: Focus of Corrections from SSE (First Response)

Participant #	Focus of corrections	# of times
2	grammar	18
	punctuation	3
3	MADE NO CORRECTIONS	
4	grammar	18
	added words	2
	changed words	2
	indentation	5
5	grammar	18
	added words	7
	changed words	5
	deleted words	4
	capitalization	3
	indentation	1
	paragraph spacing	1
6	grammar	21
	added words	4
	capitalization	2
	punctuation	6
7	grammar	5
	added words	3
	deleted words	1

Table 6: Focus of Corrections from SSE (First Response)

Participant #	Focus of corrections	# of times
	punctuation	3
8	grammar	17
	punctuation	2
	indentation	5
9	grammar	11
	changed words	8
	added words	6
	deleted words	3
	punctuation	7
	capitalization	2
	indentation	5
10	grammar	19
	added words	7
	changed words	3
	deleted words	1
	punctuation	7
	capitalization	1
11	grammar	1
	indentation	2
	paragraph spacing	1
12	grammar	8

Some of the participants corrected the errors *directly*, for example, adding an "s" to the end of a word so that the subject and the verb agreed, while others corrected the errors *indirectly* by either circling or underlining it. One student went as far as circling all of the grammar errors and wrote over each circle what the writer needed to do to correct the error, such as "check spelling", "write in plural form", or "write in past tense", as seen in Table 7.

Table 7. How the Participants Corrected the SSE (First Response)

Participant #	How they corrected the essay
1	direct corrections
2	indirect corrections
	circled mistakes
3	MADE NO CORRECTIONS
4	direct and indirect corrections
	circled and underlined mistakes
5	direct corrections
6	indirect corrections
	underlined mistakes
7	direct corrections
8	indirect corrections
	circled and wrote over each one what was wrong with the word
9	direct corrections
10	direct and indirect corrections
	circled and underlined mistakes
11	indirect corrections

Table 7. How the Participants Corrected the SSE (First Response)

Participant #	How they corrected the essay
	circled mistake
12	indirect corrections
	circled and underlined mistakes

Teachers often provide their students with feedback in the margins or at the end. Teachers tend to write marginal comments about specific areas of the written work, such as suggestions on how to elaborate more on a certain topic, questions or doubts the teacher may have, or positive or negative comments on something the teacher liked or disliked. In the area at the end of the assignment, teachers tend to write end comments about the students' writing style and/or writing assignment as a whole, such as comments on major errors found throughout the assignment or positive/negative comments about the assignment in general.

The comments the participants wrote when they responded to the SSE the first time were equally divided between marginal comments and end comments. Of the marginal comments provided by the participants, most of them were suggestions for the writer about specific areas of the essay. Sometimes these comments were in the form of a question such as, "Can you rephrase this?" Some questions were asked to try to get the writer to elaborate more about a certain topic, for example, "Why is it that you believe that they (motorcycles) are so dangerous?" Other times the comments seemed to be direct orders, for instance, "Clarify meaning", "Rethink your thought", or "Be more specific". Very few participants provided positive feedback in their margins, for example "You have a good exposition", "Good example", or "Very good work. I also believe that motorcycles are dangerous". See Table 8 for more examples.

Table 8. Marginal Comments from SSE (First Response)

Participant #	Type of Comment	# of times	Example
1	suggestion	1	Rewrite your conclusion.
2	positive feedback	1	Good example.
	question	1	What is expensive?
3	question	1	What is your thesis?
	positive feedback	1	Good.
4	suggestion	1	Rethink your thought.
	cause of error	1	Run-on sentence.
5	cause of error	1	Run-on sentence.
	suggestion	1	Try separating your ideas.
6	positive feedback	1	Very good work.
	suggestion	1	How about a little more info & detail here?
	question	1	Why do you believe they are dangerous?
7	suggestion	1	Look for English translation.
	question	2	What are you trying to say?
8	suggestion	4	You need a transition sentence.
	question	4	Why is it a waste of money?
9	question	2	Do you mean ride a bicycle?
	suggestion	2	Elaborate more on this.
10	question	1	What are some example prices?
	suggestion	3	Work on the plurals and pronouns.

Table 8. Marginal Comments from SSE (First Response)

Participant #	Type of Comment	# of times	Example
	positive feedback	1	Very true.
11	"grammar hints"	1	Check the use of verbs with a third person singular or plural noun or pronoun.
	suggestion	1	Revise some of the names of motorcycles used here.
12	MADE NO MARGINAL COMMENTS		

Of the end comments offered by the participants, most of them were suggestions for the writer on what they should work on more when writing the next draft. These suggestions were usually in a listed or bulleted format and gave the writer broader feedback about the essay in general. These end comments focused mainly on writing a more powerful thesis statement, better and more organized supporting details, and grammar errors the writer had made throughout the essay. More positive feedback was provided by the participants in the end comments than in the marginal comments. One participant told the writer to see her in her office to further discuss the essay. Two participants did not write any end comments at all. Table 9 shows some examples of end comments the participants provided.

Table 9. End Comments from SSE (First Response)

Participant #	Type of Comment	# of times	Example
1	suggestion	1	You need to add more information…
	positive feedback	1	You had a good opening statement.
2	positive feedback	2	You have some good information.
	suggestion	2	Please use four to six sentences per paragraph.

Table 9. End Comments from SSE (First Response)

Participant #	Type of Comment	# of times	Example
3	suggestion	3	Come see me and let's work on this together
	positive feedback	1	Good idea...
4	suggestion	4	Rethink ideas, if possible a cluster
	positive feedback	1	I like the idea and where you are trying to go!
5	positive feedback	1	You've made very good points.
	suggestion	3	Consider spellchecker next time.
6	suggestion	2	Always check your grammar, punctuation, subject/verb/tense agreement.
7	suggestion	3	Check you spelling on the brand names of the motorcycle companies.
	positive feedback	1	Good idea with essay topic.
8	MADE NO END COMMENTS		
9	MADE NO END COMMENTS		
10	suggestion	2	Rephrase some sentences that are difficult to understand.
11	positive feedback	1	Your points are interesting.
	suggestion	4	You could probably use more elements as evidence for your argument on motorcycles.
12	negative feedback	4	Your conclusion is not really concluding much.

Table 9. End Comments from SSE (First Response)

Participant #	Type of Comment	# of times	Example
	suggestion	3	Try to introduce your topic & express your opinion on it.

First Interview with Professor

At the beginning of the semester I interviewed the professor to obtain a better understanding of what her goals were for the semester, in other words, what she wanted the participants to gain from English 6030 class. In her first interview, when I asked what her expectations for the course were, she said she wanted the participants to understand what teaching writing involved. During the course of the semester, she wanted the participants to explore both the theory and practice of teaching writing, so that they could apply what they had learned to their own teaching experiences. They would discuss theory so that they would create and follow their own philosophy about teaching writing, and practice writing themselves so that they could become better writers and in turn, become better teachers of writing. Her own personal philosophy about teaching writing is embedded in a general philosophy towards teaching called collaborative learning. She believes students become better writers by working together and sharing each other's writing. With regards to the group of students she had in Fall 2006 in English 6030, she said there were three kinds of students: those who "think they already know about writing because they think they are good writers", those who are just beginning as teachers and are open to new ideas being presented in class, and then there are those that really "don't know much at all about either writing or teaching writing."

Class Observations and Dialogic logs

I visited English 6030 eight times during the course of the Fall 2006 semester in order to observe the participants in their weekly discussions. At the beginning of each class, the participants would exchange their weekly dialogic learning logs with some of the other participants to read and comment on. After the logs were returned to their original writers, the professor would begin the class by briefly discussing what the objectives of that particular class would be, collecting any assignments that might be due that day, answering any questions the participants might have, and talking briefly about the topics that were going to be discussed by the student(s) previously assigned to present that night. Then, the participant(s) assigned to present that night, would make his/her presentation to the class, while the other participants and the professor listened and participated by making comments or asking questions. After each student presented his/her work, the remaining participants evaluated the presentation by anonymously completing and returning a form provided by the professor. At the end of the class, the professor would further discuss the topics presented that night, if necessary, and remind the participants of assignments and readings due the following week.

Although I visited English 6030 frequently throughout the semester, I was interested mainly in learning about the participants' views on specific topics pertaining to this study, which were error correction and response to writing. The following sections of this study discuss what I observed during my visits to English 6030 and what the participants wrote in their dialogic logs on those specific topics of error correction and response to writing.

Class Observations: October 23, 2006: Error correction

During my visits to English 6030, I focused on error correction and feedback. On October 23, 2006, the topic for the class was error correction. The readings assigned for the night were Ferris's "The 'Grammar Correction" Debate in L2 Writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (And what do we do in the meantime…?)" and Truscott's "The Case Against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes". The participants began the class by exchanging their dialogic log due for that day and reading and commenting to each other on them. After that, the professor gave a brief introduction on the topic of error correction, and then turned the class over to the presenters assigned for that class.

The presenters began by giving out two hand-outs, a journal entry and a Question and Answer sheet written by anonymous students, and asked the remaining participants to read and respond to them. While the participants responded to the hand-outs, the presenters wrote two questions on the board: "Explain exactly what you would do when you see an error on a student's paper" and "Does error correction help students in accuracy over time?" After the participants finished responding to the hand-outs, the presenters asked the participants to answer these questions keeping in mind how they had just responded to the hand-outs. Most of the participants said they simply circled or marked the error and hoped the student would figure out what the error was on their own, because as one participant said, "If I do it for them, they don't really 'learn' what the mistake was all about". In other words, he believed that if the student went through the process of figuring out what was wrong and how to correct it, then he/she would not make the same mistake in the future. Other participants said if the error they found was a simple one such as an incorrect verb tense or misspelling, they would make direct corrections near where the error was, and perhaps even write a short comment such as "verb

tense" or "check spelling" to make sure the student knew *why* it was incorrect. On the other hand, if the error was such that it changed the meaning of the idea the student is trying to convey, the participants said they would write suggestions that might help the writer change or enhance what he/she is writing.

As for the second question, "Does error correction help students in accuracy and/or over time?", only a few participants remembered to respond to it because the class discussion had focused more on how they correct errors on their students' papers. Those that did respond all agreed that error correction does help the student to learn from their mistakes and that, over time, the student should make fewer and fewer mistakes between the first and final drafts.

After the participants gave their responses to the questions, the presenters gave out hand outs with suggestions for teachers on how to provide feedback. The participants and the professor read and discussed these suggestions. Some of the suggestions provided said teachers could use codes when correcting their students' papers. Therefore, the presenters also handed out a list of suggested codes to use when correcting. Finally, the presenters finished discussing the readings assigned for that class on error correction. After the presentation, the remaining participants completed the evaluation forms and handed them over to the professor, who briefly talked about the topics the presenters had just discussed, pointing out certain items that needed to be emphasized. She finished the class by reminding them about the readings for the following week.

Dialogic logs: October 23, 2006: Error correction

After each class, the participants were required to write dialogic logs to express their thoughts and ideas on the topics discussed during class. Although many participants wrote about

other ideas not discussed in class, some of the participants wrote about error correction and/or feedback in their logs. Here are some comments on error correction:

- "When deciding how to correct student writing, it usually means that teachers have to get creative in order to be ready to correct without disheartening the students."

- "I agree with the fact that counting grammar errors in a composition is not the way to go when correcting a paper…"

- "The truth is there is no correct way of doing this [correcting students' papers]."

- "In the end it was evident that each teacher has his or her own way of correcting their students' works and that this greatly depends on the students, what the class is about, and what the teacher wants to accomplish."

- "I personally took it [grammar and error correction] as a reality check to myself because my system was so bizarre compared to the others. Usually I use colors and symbols to point out different things that should be looked upon in the journals or written material."

- "I think grammar correction should be done, but not to the extent where we only focus on grammar taking away the importance that content also deserves."

- "…we need to point out their errors otherwise they will not know aspects they need to work on."

- "They [the teachers] circle the words or areas the students need to work on, and they give them a hint of what the problem is… I do it myself…"

- "…there are many L2 students who want to improve on their foreign language and error correction is a good way to help them improve. But we should also be lenient because they will most likely commit a lot of errors and by correcting them we are practically writing the essay for them."

- "…people expect to be graded on grammar and therefore doing error correction will still be common in the classroom."

- "In my case I consider content and organization a lot more important than grammar and vocabulary."

- "When I correct my students' papers I usually just circle the mistakes. Usually these mistakes are spelling mistakes."

These comments show that the participants believe there are no rules or format for teachers to follow when correcting their students' papers. It is an individual process where teachers have to use their imagination and use whatever means possible to get through to their students without discouraging them. These comments also show the participants believe that although correcting grammar is an important part of providing feedback to their students, especially to L2 students learning a second language, other aspects of writing are just as important as grammar.

Class Observations: October 30, 2006: Response to Writing

On October 30, 2006, the topic for the class was feedback to student writing. The readings assigned for that night were Hyland's "Responding to Student Writing" and Sperling's "Revealing the Teacher as Reader: A Framework for Studying Response**."** As usual, the participants began the class by exchanging their dialogic logs due for that day and reading and commenting on them.

For this class, the professor began the night's topic by asking the participants what they did with an essay in terms of feedback. The first student to respond to the question said she provided feedback to her students by writing comments and/or suggestions in the margins and at the end of the paper. Another participant said she believed that most students do not write their

best papers in their first drafts. Many of the other participants that responded to the question all agreed that even though they do provide feedback to their students' papers, many of their students do not care for the feedback, or don't necessarily agree with it, especially when the feedback comes from a peer.

After this brief exchange, the professor handed out three drafts an anonymous student wrote for the same essay to show how this particular student handled the feedback he received from his peers. The student began with an essay half a page long and after two more drafts and many comments from his peers and professor, he finished with a three page essay that had parts of his original essay and new sections based on suggestions from his peers and professor. The purpose of these essays was to show the participants from this class how much or how little feedback can affect a student writer. After discussing these essays, the professor then turned the class over to the presenters for that evening.

The presenters for this class on feedback discussed the articles assigned for the particular class on peer revision, why teachers like to use this method, the pros and cons of peer review, and data from studies on this subject. After the presentation, the participants completed the evaluation form and handed them over to the professor.

Dialogic logs: October 30, 2006: Feedback

Of the twelve participants in this study, only two of them mentioned anything about feedback in their dialogic logs for that class. Here is what those two participants had to say about feedback:

- "…teacher feedback can do both harm and good to a student. It causes harm because you are being authoritarian who either rewrites the essay for the student or completely takes over their writing and imposing your own ideas into them. Students may feel threatened

by comments because they lose their own voice and idea when they apply a teacher's feedback in their writing."

- "…peer feedback which involves students sharing their writing with their peers. Peer revision is a very effective method of helping students improve their writing…only if the students are cooperative. Some may just read and tell their peers how good it is and how they like it…those who are willing would generally give comments and even do some surface correction. This may be a double edge sword because their corrections may cause more damage than help."

- "I also like to provide more substantial comments on the margins…"

- "Peer feedback is quite valuable because it improves the overall finish of the paper. On the margins of my student's papers I advise my students [about] alternatives that encourage students to look at their own writing in a different light."

These comments show that the participants, or at least the ones that reflected on the topic of feedback in their dialogic logs, believe that while it is beneficial to provide feedback to their students, it can also hinder their creativity in the sense that students might not understand or care for the comments given to them, and therefore can't or won't make the necessary changes to their writing.

Perceptions of Writing 2 (POW 2)

The second questionnaire, Perceptions of Writing 2 (POW 2), was administered on the last day of class. The purpose of this questionnaire was to observe any changes in the participants' perceptions about teaching writing that might have occurred since the beginning of the semester. One of the original twelve participants was absent on the day the questionnaire was administered.

Question number 1 asked the participants if their expectations had been met. All of the participants agreed that the expectations they had when they first began the course had been met. One participant wrote that having completed the course, she was interested in other aspects of writing. Another participant wrote he wished he had taken the course earlier. Most of the participants wrote that they learned a lot about the theory behind teaching writing and the different techniques involved in assessing their students' writing. A summary of the participants' answers can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10. Were the Participants' Expectations Met?: Question #1

Participant #	Were your expectations met?
1	ABSENT
2	Yes, the class was interactive, and dealt with everyday issues
3	Yes, I improved as a writer, and learned from the readings
4	Yes, I learned much theory
5	Yes, more than expected
6	Yes, now I know more about how to teach, assess and correct essays
7	Yes, it cleared doubts I had before the class and now I am interested in other aspects of writing
8	Yes, I learned many theories and techniques to apply and mold my own teaching philosophy
9	Yes, more than expected, I learned about conferencing and post processes
10	Yes, I learned about composition, writing, and the teaching of it I wish I could have taken the course earlier
11	Yes, now I have a different idea about the theory of composition

Table 10. Were the Participants' Expectations Met?: Question #1

Participant #	Were your expectations met?
12	Yes, it was worth it

Question number 2 in POW 2 asked the participants to place a number in front of the following five items to show the order of importance they give each one when correcting their students' writing assignments: organization, grammar, style, mechanics, and content. The majority of the participants placed organization as the most important of the selections, followed by a tie between content, grammar, and mechanics, leaving style for last. When comparing these results with the results from the first questionnaire, I found them to be different. In the first questionnaire, the participants chose content as the most important aspect of writing, with organization trailing close behind. In the second questionnaire, the participants considered organization to be the most important aspect of writing, while content, grammar, and mechanics were equally important. The results from this question can be seen in Table 11.

Table 11. Order of Importance from POW 2: Question #2

N = 11	Content	Organization	Style	Grammar	Mechanics
Most important	**73%**	0%	27%	0%	0%
	18%	**82%**	0%	0%	0%
	0%	18%	**46%**	18%	18%
	0%	0%	18%	**73%**	9%
Least important	9%	0%	9%	9%	**73%**

Question number 3 in POW 2 asked the participants what aspects of English 6030 helped them to improve as writing teachers. Some participants mentioned specific topics that were discussed throughout the semester that helped them to improve their teaching, such as writing conferences, error correction, assessment, and feedback. Other participants wrote about new knowledge they had acquired from the course such as what qualities a good writing teacher

should have. For two participants it seemed they explicitly reported change in the way they viewed their own writing process because one of them wrote the "writing process doesn't always work" and the other wrote that now he "takes more into consideration when giving assignments, correcting his students' papers, and when he writes himself." See Table 12 for a detailed summary of the answers the participants provided.

Table 12. Aspects of the Class that Helped the Participants to Improve as Writing Teachers: Question #3

Participant #	What they wrote:
1	ABSENT
2	Assessment and portfolios
3	All the readings
4	What qualities a good teacher should have
5	Writing conferences
	Error correction
6	Writing process
	Error correction
7	Qualities a good writing teacher should have
8	The writing process doesn't always work
9	Approaches we can take towards our students
	Conferencing
10	Teacher feedback, peer feedback, and conferencing
11	Techniques that researchers use in their methodologies provide ideas for teachers to come up with new techniques to apply in their classrooms
12	I take more things into consideration when giving assignments, correcting, and

Table 12. Aspects of the Class that Helped the Participants to Improve as Writing Teachers: Question #3

Participant #	What they wrote:
	when I myself write

Question number 4 from POW 2 asked the participants what their focus would be if they were to teach a writing course, after having completed English 6030. The participants responded that they would focus on content and organization by first introducing their students to different genres and then having them generate, organize, and communicate their ideas in writing, all within a student-centered environment. Table 13 shows examples of the responses the participants gave.

Table 13. Focus of Writing Course from POW 2: Question #4

Participant #	What they wrote:
1	ABSENT
2	content, style, structure, mechanics
3	content, organization, coherence, styles
4	content and organization
5	levels of formality
	make students aware of their audience, purpose, tone, style, and vocabulary
	then content, structure, and then revision
6	introduce the different kinds of genres
	explain and search for previous knowledge
	begin writing to improve student's skills
7	different types of genres

Table 13. Focus of Writing Course from POW 2: Question #4

Participant #	What they wrote:
8	organization of ideas
9	generating ideas
	translating those ideas into writing
10	focus on differences between reasons for writing
11	conferencing
	student-centered
12	communication of ideas
	style

Sample Student Essay (SSE): Second Response

In addition to POW 2, I gave the participants another copy of the SSE they had responded to at the beginning of the semester in order to observe any changes in the way the participants provided feedback. The instructions were the same as the first time I gave the SSE to the participants: respond to it as if it were from a student of theirs. They should provide the writer with whatever they thought was necessary to write a better second draft. Although the participants continued to focus their corrections mostly on grammar, there seemed to be a tendency throughout the second set of responses to the SSE to provide fewer grammar corrections than in the first responses to the SSE, and two of those who made few responses the first time made no corrections at all in their second response to the SSE. Another participant made grammar corrections in her second response but hadn't made any corrections in her first response to the SSE. Examples of the corrections made can be seen in Table 14.

Table 14. Focus of Corrections in SSE (Second Response)

Participant #	What they focused on	No. of times
1	ABSENT	
2	grammar	17
	punctuation	3
3	grammar	6
	added words	2
	changed words	3
4	grammar	16
	added words	4
	changed words	1
5	grammar	15
	added words	5
	changed words	3
	indentation	3
	paragraph spacing	1
6	grammar	8
	added words	2
7	MADE NO CORRECTIONS	
8	grammar	5
	punctuation	5
	changed words	5
9	grammar	9

Table 14. Focus of Corrections in SSE (Second Response)

Participant #	What they focused on	No. of times
	changed words	2
	added words	3
	punctuation	2
10	grammar	16
	added words	1
	deleted words	1
	punctuation	2
	capitalization	1
11	MADE NO CORRECTIONS	
12	Grammar	7

The participants made more *indirect* corrections by circling or underlining the mistakes the writer had made than *direct* corrections by actually writing what the student needed to do to correct the problem. In the first response to the SSE, one of the participants circled a mistake and wrote over the circled word what exactly was wrong, for example, "check spelling" or "check tense". This same participant used this same technique to respond to the SSE the second time, but much less frequently. As mentioned above, two participants made no corrections at all in their second response to the SSE. When I compared the two sets of responses to the SSE, I found the participants were consistent in that in both responses they provided more indirect corrections than direct corrections. How the participants made their corrections in the second response to the SSE can be seen in Table 15.

Table 15. How the Participants Corrected the SSE (Second Response)

Participant #	How did they correct the essay
1	ABSENT
2	indirect corrections
	circled mistakes
3	direct corrections
4	direct and indirect corrections
	circled and underlined mistakes
5	direct corrections
6	indirect corrections
	underlined mistakes
7	MADE NO CORRECTIONS
8	indirect corrections
	circled and wrote over each one what was wrong with the word
9	direct corrections
10	direct corrections
	circled mistakes
11	MADE NO CORRECTIONS
12	indirect corrections
	underlined mistakes

Of the marginal comments, most of them were suggestions for the writer. Some of these suggestions were in question form, as if offering an idea to the writer such as, "What is the difference in terms of performance?" Other suggestions seemed more demanding, for example,

"Be more specific, provide more detail" or "Use a dictionary next time". Some comments showed utter confusion, for instance, "What?" or "Why?" Only one participant gave positive feedback in his marginal comments by writing "good information" by one of the paragraphs. See Table 16 for more examples.

Table 16. Marginal Comments from SSE (Second Response)

Participant #	Type of Comment	# of times	Examples
1	ABSENT		
2	suggestion	2	Use a dictionary next time.
	positive feedback	2	You have good exposition.
3	Question	2	What is your paper about?
4	MADE NO MARGINAL COMMENTS		
5	MADE NO MARGINAL COMMENTS		
6	Suggestion	3	This can be a paragraph.
7	MADE NO MARGINAL COMMENTS		
8	suggestion	1	Be more specific, more detail
	question	2	Why is that?
	confusion	1	I don't see the connection with the rest of the essay.
9	question	2	Do you mean save?
	suggestion	2	A little bit more details on this could help the essay.
10	question	1	Why?
	suggestion	3	Develop the introduction more.

Table 16. Marginal Comments from SSE (Second Response)

Participant #	Type of Comment	# of times	Examples
11	suggestion	4	This area could be developed further.
12	cause of error	1	Intro lacks development.

The majority of the end comments were suggestions for the writer on what was needed to be done in order to rewrite the essay. The suggestions were either bulleted, listed, or in paragraph form and gave the writer a more extensive overview of what they should work on. These end comments focused on the overall organization of the essay, more specifically on keeping sentences about the same topic together in one paragraph, and that new ideas should begin new paragraphs. A few participants reminded the writer about working on grammatical errors. Two participants asked the writer to come see them during office hours to further discuss the essay. More positive feedback was provided by the participants in the end comments than in the marginal comments, and furthermore, more positive feedback was given by the participants in their first response to the SSE than in the second response. Finally, three participants did not write any end comments at all. Table 17 shows some examples of the end comments.

Table 17. End Comments from SSE (Second Response)

Participant #	Type of Comment	# of times	Examples
1	ABSENT		
2	suggestion	3	Try not to use so many parentheses and work on developing sentences.
	positive feedback	1	You have good information.
3	Suggestion	1	Come see me. We'll go over it.

Table 17. End Comments from SSE (Second Response)

Participant #	Type of Comment	# of times	Examples
4	MADE NO END COMMENTS		
5	MADE NO END COMMENTS		
6	positive feedback	1	You give good reasons for why it is good, as well as give examples to the reader on different types of bikes.
	suggestion	3	Those words which are underlined need to be corrected...
7	suggestion	2	Find your topic sentence.
8	negative feedback	1	The essay seems a bit disorganized.
	suggestion	2	Work on your transition sentences.
9	suggestion	2	You should give more details on how to drive one.
10	suggestion	1	Develop more and work on the grammar errors.
	positive feedback	1	Interesting topic…
11	MADE NO END COMMENTS		
12	negative feedback	2	All your paragraphs are lacking development and support.
	suggestion	1	You also have some grammatical errors you should revise.

Second Interview with Professor

At the end of the semester, I interviewed the professor for a second time, in order to find out if she was able to meet the goals she had set for her students and her general opinion of the knowledge the participants had gained from English 6030. When I asked if her expectations for the course had been fulfilled, she answered that for the most part they were. The participants learned a lot about the theory of teaching writing, and they also had many opportunities to write throughout the semester. On the other hand, she pointed out that the participants did not receive enough practice on what they had learned as far as feedback and revision were concerned. She said the participants that presented these topics in class probably gained more knowledge in that area than the other participants because they had the chance to work directly with the topic. In retrospect, she wished she had offered the participants more opportunities to practice writing with large group activities.

The professor also added that recently the Master of Arts in English Education program at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez has been leaning more toward the theoretical aspects of their courses to provide theoretical basis for practice, and she felt she has done the same. The participants were more theory-oriented than when they began the semester. Because the participants already had their own philosophies on how to teach writing, and because they did not have ample opportunities to change their views, the professor believed that it would be difficult to see real growth in just one semester. She said, "I wish that these students would have opened up more to the possibilities for teaching writing." Then again, she found the class did offer new insights to some of the participants and this changed their way of teaching writing, if only for a few participants. Her main concern was that in actuality, most students do not apply what they learn in class immediately because "routine is so easy" and people are set in their ways

of doing things, and it is easier to simply continue teaching and assessing the way they have been doing it for so long.

Interviews with Participants

I sent participants a set of interview questions via email for them to answer and return to me. These questions were designed to obtain more information about the participants as students and as writing teachers (See Appendix H for questions). Of the twelve original participants, only seven of them answered the questions.

Question number 1 asked the participants, "How does a student become a better writer?" The same answer seemed to repeat itself continuously as I read their responses – practice, practice, practice. Most of the participants wrote the best way students can become better writers was to practice as much as possible, to read and write as often as they could, and of course, have the right guidance to help them understand what was wrong and why.

The participants answered question number 2, "What is your role as a teacher in helping students learn to write?" by responding that they were basically there to facilitate, to guide, and to support. They help the students by exposing them to readings and other material that will provide them with the necessary tools they will need to write themselves, and then offer them the feedback that will guide them to accomplish the writing task.

The third question the participants answered was, "When you are going to write a paper, what is important for you?" Most of the participants wrote that first they brainstorm their ideas, then create a simple outline, and finally begin writing by focusing mainly on content and ideas, followed by structure, format, and grammar. Two of the participants wrote that they just sit down in front of their computer and let the ideas flow while they write.

Various questions making up question number four asked, "What is your opinion on teachers responding to your written work? How important is feedback to you? How do you handle the corrections and/or comments the teacher makes on your written work?" Participants answered unanimously that feedback was very important to them as writers. Many of the participants wrote that they looked forward to feedback from teachers. This feedback can generate different feelings in different people. For example, one participant wrote that she "loved to see a crucified paper" while another participant wrote that she "feels paranoid, but enjoys the criticism".

The fifth and final question from the participants' interviews was "What steps would you take to teach an essay?" I read and organized the responses and came up with the following steps:

- Present the students with models of an essay

- Analyze the essay

- Go over the basic parts of an essay (introduction, body, conclusion)

- Emphasize that writers must keep to one topic per paragraph

- Emphasize that they as writers must keep in mind their audience, purpose, style, and levels of formality when writing

- Write the essay

- Peer revision

- Rewrite essay

The responses to these interview questions show that the participants believe the best way for a student to become a better writer is through practice, and that teachers as facilitators and

guides, present their students with the necessary tools and steps to write better essays. As students themselves, they organize their ideas before actually sitting down to write their own papers, and appreciate the feedback their teachers give them.

Follow-up Interviews

After having analyzed all of the data collected throughout the semester, I found that of the twelve original participants, four of them made significant changes between the two sets of responses to the SSE. I wondered why they corrected these essays differently. Did their views on feedback change now that English 6030 was over? What influenced the participants to correct these essays in such different ways? Was it something from English 6030? In order to answer these questions, I conducted a follow-up interview with these 4 participants, in hopes of obtaining more information (See Appendix J for questions).

Participant 1: John[1]

John was born and raised in Puerto Rico. His first language is Spanish and his second language is English. At the time of this study, he had three years teaching experience and was currently teaching a Basic English course at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez. In his POW 1 questionnaire, John wrote that he expected to learn in English 6030 "new techniques on how to come up with innovative writing tasks" for his students. He wanted to learn how to make the writing experience more enjoyable for his students. When POW 1 asked what his focus would be if he were to teach a writing course, he wrote that his "main concern was to eliminate the fear on the part of the students towards writing." He wanted students to be able to express themselves more freely. He wrote that his role would be simply to "incarnate an editor" to

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[1] The names of the participants have been changed to protect their identities.

provide the necessary feedback. He believed strongly in revising students' work, either by him or by the students' peers.

After he completed the course, John wrote in his POW 2 questionnaire that his expectations had been fulfilled because he learned about the theory of composition, and that helped him to focus more on "the concept of writing as a process instead of an act." He wrote that many of the techniques the researchers use in their methodologies gave him ideas for new techniques he can use and apply in his own classroom. POW 2 asked what his focus would be if he were to teach a writing course and John wrote that conferencing would be a big part of his student-centered course.

In the follow-up interview with John, I asked him what aspects of English 6030 changed his way of teaching writing, if any, and how. He said that some articles he read in the course gave him ideas on how to approach his students differently. He also said he evaluates the assignments he gives differently. Before taking the course, he knew about rubrics but after working more directly with them and applying them to the assignments, he evaluates them better now. John also pointed out that the way the professor corrected his assignments, showing him how certain things were linked, also influenced him to correct his students' assignments differently.

John said he plans on using the margins more often, not only to comment but to write something meaningful for the student. Before John took English 6030, he used to write comments focused on grammar errors in his students' writing. After taking the course, he writes more opinions about what he is reading. He also said he used to be "dry" with his comments by saying, for example, "Does this really belong here?" Now he says he takes a more liberal approach to his comments, such as, "What do you think?" John stated that he has always been a

"margin lover" because that is proof to his students that he has read the essay. When I asked if he thought all this feedback and error correction helped students' accuracy over time, he said it was difficult to predict but he has seen improvement with some of his students.

When John responded to the SSE the first time, he wrote two margin comments, one on the use of verbs with a third person subject, and the other to check the spelling of the brand names the writer used in the essay. He reminded the writer to indent his paragraphs, and questioned a double space between two paragraphs. He circled only one word in the entire essay, "ocupe", to show that it was misspelled. He numbered the paragraphs on the right side to make reference to them later in the end comments. On the bottom of the essay, John wrote extensive end comments which continued to the back of the paper. In these comments he made references to paragraphs that should be revised, reminded the writer about the major components of essays, and suggested using personal experiences to enhance the essay overall.

The second time John responded to the SSE, he wrote only three marginal comments: one telling the writer to expand and organize the essay, another to revise a specific area into the "pros and cons" of motorcycles, and finally, pointing out that a certain area of the essay could be developed further. John made no corrections at all throughout the essay and did not write any end comments either.

In the follow-up interview, I asked John to look at the two sets of responses he gave to the SSE and elaborate on his reasons for the differences. He said that the first time he responded to the SSE, he wrote many comments because he wanted to "include everything he could about every aspect of the essay" and numbered the paragraphs to make it easier for him to point out areas of the essay that needed work. The second time he responded to the SSE, he said he made his comments more specific and near the area that needed the improvement. He added that he no

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longer numbers the paragraphs when he corrects his students' essays because during the semester a student in one of his classes asked him to stop doing that. She said she didn't like it because she wrote the essay and she knows how her ideas are organized.

I believe John has made a positive change in his own personal teaching philosophy, perhaps more "student-oriented" as he mentioned in his follow-up interview, while at the same time, more relaxed and realizing that his role as the teacher is to guide students to improve their writing, and not give them everything on a silver platter by addressing every single little detail of the assignment. He will continue to be a "margin lover," although perhaps to a lesser extent and with more subtle comments.

Participant 2: Beth

Beth was born and raised in the United States. In spite of this, she considers her first language to be Spanish and her second language to be English. At the time of this study, Beth did not have any teaching experience. In her POW 1 questionnaire, she wrote that she wanted to learn more about the writing process so that she could become a better writer herself. She wanted to learn about "the study of writing" and how if affects students and teachers. When POW 1 asked what her focus would be if she were to teach a writing course, she wrote she would want her students to be able to organize their ideas, put them down on paper, keeping in mind the main idea and content, followed by style and grammar.

After she completed the course, Beth wrote in her POW 2 questionnaire that her expectations had been fulfilled because the doubts she had before the course began were resolved, and she found that she was interested in other aspects of writing. When POW 2 asked what her focus would be if she were to teach a writing course, she wrote she would show her students examples of the different types of genres and discuss how each of them is different.

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In the follow-up interview with Beth, I asked her what aspects of English 6030 changed the way she would teach writing in the future, if any, and how. She said that during the semester she gave a presentation about correction codes, and believes she will use this when she corrects her students' papers. Also, Beth said she believes the course was valuable to her because it helped her with her own writing by making her aware of her own mistakes. She added that before English 6030, she would read an essay and focus so much on correcting the grammatical errors that by the time she reached the end of the paper, she had no idea what the paper was about because she was so distracted by all the corrections she had made. In one of the discussions in class, people commented that if the teacher corrects everything for the student, how are they going to learn? Sometimes they should figure it out for themselves. This made her realize she was focusing too much on grammar and missing the bigger picture. She learned that when correcting students' papers, she should read the essay as a whole and get the message first, find something positive to say to the writer about the essay, and leave the grammar and mechanics for later. When I asked if she thought all this feedback and error correction helped students' accuracy over time, Beth said it does, but it all depends on the student. If the students are not aware of the mistakes they make or don't care to improve, then they won't.

When Beth responded to the SSE the first time, she made ten direct corrections including subject-verb agreement, plural form of nouns, punctuation, and adding and/or deleting word(s). She made indirect corrections by circling or underlining four misspelled words. She wrote four marginal comments, three of which were about the incorrect spelling of a word, and one which was a question, "What are you trying to say?" In the end comments, she began with some positive feedback, "Good idea with essay topic…," then suggested the writer check some areas of the essay such as spelling and grammar.

The second time Beth responded to the SSE, she didn't make any corrections whatsoever in the entire essay and no marginal comments either. She began her end comments with positive feedback, "I like your topic on motorcycles," then suggested to the writer "find your topic sentence" and to use a dictionary for words the writer didn't know.

In the follow-up interview, I asked Beth to look at the two sets of responses she gave to the SSE and elaborate on her reasons for the differences. She said she had learned to focus on the message the writer was trying to get across, and she realized that the second time she responded to the SSE, if she stopped to write a marginal comment, it would interrupt the flow of the message. She didn't make any grammatical corrections the second time she responded to the essay because she had realized that these mistakes were not the major problem in the essay, but the lack of a topic sentence and organized, supporting details. The second time she responded to the SSE she suggested the use of a dictionary but didn't point out where to apply it because as Beth put it, "Sometimes self-discovery is good."

I believe Beth gained knowledge about her own writing through this class and the writing experiences that gave her the opportunities to practice and improve. In Beth's case, she learned to focus on what students were trying to say in their paper, and that the students' messages were the most important thing she should pay attention to because if she allowed herself to get caught up in the minor details, she could miss out on the ideas students were trying to convey. She also learned to allow students to figure out some things for themselves because this way, they were sure to learn why it is incorrect and most likely not repeat the mistake in the future.

Participant 3: Mary

Mary was born and raised in the United States but later moved to Puerto Rico. She considers her first language to be English and her second language Spanish. At the time of this

study, Mary had one semester of teaching experience and was teaching a Basic English course at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez. In her POW 1 questionnaire, Mary wrote that she expected to learn how to introduce, develop, and engage writing in a classroom. When POW 1 asked what her focus would be if she were to teach a writing course, she wrote that her main focus would be to "express ideas on paper in a clear, precise way" including all aspects of writing. Her role as teacher would be to "not discourage but show respect while instructing and correcting the student in their developing of writing."

After she completed the course, Mary wrote in her POW 2 questionnaire that her expectations had been fulfilled because she learned a lot about theory, which can help her when teaching her own classes. When POW 2 asked what her focus would be if she were to teach a writing course, she wrote she would focus on content and organization so she understands the message the writer is trying to transmit to the reader.

In the follow-up interview with Mary, I asked her what aspects of English 6030 changed her way of teaching writing, if any, and how. She specifically mentioned learning about rubrics and how using them as a tool when correcting students' papers helps her to be more fair in evaluating students' essays. She said they could be applied to any type of writing and that she uses them in her own classes. Also, Mary learned that the focus of all written work should be the thesis statement, the body, and the conclusions and students should focus more on brainstorming and organizing what they want to say rather than on grammar.

Mary found this class was very valuable to her because she learned to "take things more smoothly." Before English 6030, when she corrected her students' papers, she used a system of five different colored pens and each color applied to something different. This system worked for Mary when she had only one group of 30 students. When she began working at university level

where she had various groups of 30 students each, it became more difficult to follow this system. Mary also learned about peer revision in English 6030 and how this can help her students as well as her. She says that when she allows the students to review each other's work, they tend to focus more on grammatical errors and by the time the student rewrites the paper, and hands it in to her, she can focus more on the content because the grammatical errors are fewer in number and therefore, less distracting for her so she can focus more on what the student is trying to say. When I asked if she thought all this feedback and error correction helped students' accuracy over time, Mary said it can help, but if the teacher comes on too strong, the students will hold back. She has noticed that friendlier feedback gets better results.

When Mary responded to the SSE the first time, she drew an arrow at the beginning of each paragraph, indicating indentation. She made 16 direct corrections including subject-verb agreement, verb tense, plural form, and adding and/or deleting word(s). She circled seven misspelled words. She wrote two marginal comments next to the areas that needed to be corrected, "Rethink your thought" and "run-on sentence". She began her end comments with positive feedback, "I like the idea and where you are trying to go!" and then went on to tell the writer to indent the paragraphs, rewrite some sentences that had more than one thought, and to verify the misspelled words. She suggested using a cluster map to organize ideas. She drew a cluster map on the paper and wrote "motorcycles" in the center. Off to the right of the cluster map, she told the writer to divide each subtopic into paragraphs and to sort out the information.

The second time Mary responded to the SSE, she again drew arrows to indicate indentation. She made 16 direct corrections, including subject-verb agreement, verb tense, plural form, and adding and/or deleting word(s). She circled five misspelled words. In this essay, she did not write any marginal or end comments at all.

In the follow-up interview, I asked Mary to look at the two sets of responses she gave to the SSE and elaborate on her reasons for the differences. She said she thought she was correcting a second draft of the first one she had corrected at the beginning of the semester. Therefore, Mary thought the student didn't need as much feedback as the first time she responded to the SSE because at this point, the student should know what needed to be fixed. In spite of this, she did realize that she had roughly the same number of corrections in both essays and commented to me that even though she tries not to focus so much on grammar, it's "addictive." Mary said that before English 6030, she used to "crucify papers." Then she learned, between what was taught in the class and her own experiences with her students who were taking a negative approach to writing because of all the corrections, that she should be more lenient. Now, Mary says, instead of writing so many comments on the paper, she has more conferences with her students to discuss how their papers can improve.

In Mary's case, English 6030, in combination with the teaching experience she was going through, taught her that focusing too much on error correction was not the way to go. She realized that the excessive number of grammatical corrections along with the style she was using to make these corrections (different colored pens) was overloading her with additional work while negatively affecting her students' performance. As a result, she is more lenient when correcting her students' assignments and has more face-to-face conferences to communicate to the students how they can improve their writing.

Participant 4: Julia

Julia was born and raised in Puerto Rico. Her first language is Spanish and her second language is English. At the time this study was conducted, Julia had one year of teaching experience and was teaching an Intermediate English course at the University of Puerto Rico at

Mayagüez. In her POW 1 questionnaire, Julia wrote that she expected to learn how to make her classes more student-centered. She wanted to be more "aware of the difficulties students face when writing" and how she as the teacher could help them overcome these difficulties. When POW 1 asked what her focus would be if she were to teach a writing course, Julia wrote that she would focus more on content and organization because those aspects of writing are the most important because they help students to communicate their ideas.

After she completed the course, Julia wrote in her POW 2 questionnaire that her expectations had been fulfilled because she learned enough about theories of writing and techniques for teaching writing that she is able to create her own teaching philosophy. When POW 2 asked what her focus would be if she were to teach a writing course, she wrote that for her, the most important aspect of a writing course would be to let the students organize their ideas and express them accurately enough so others can understand the message they are trying to get across.

In the follow-up interview with Julia, I asked her what aspects of English 6030 changed her way of teaching writing, if any, and how. She said she learned in the course that she needed to focus more on content rather than grammar. Julia said that before English 6030, she would correct every single error she would find on the paper and never really paid as much attention to what the student was trying to say. When I asked if she thought all this feedback and error correction helped students' accuracy over time, Julia said she understands that English is not her students' first language but believes they should get better with grammar as time progresses, with plenty of practice, and someone there to help point out what needs to be corrected.

When Julia responded to the SSE the first time, she made seven direct corrections where she added and/or deleted a word(s), or changed one word for another. She circled or underlined

14 words or phrases and wrote near it why it was circled, in other words, what the writer needed to do to correct the error. She wrote, for example, "check spelling", "write in plural", "clarify meaning", "check verb tense", or "check definition". She made five marginal comments/questions, such as, "Why is it a waste of money?" or "Is this the word you intended to use?" Julia wrote no end comments in this essay.

The second time Julia responded to the SSE, she circled two words, "ocupe" and "iers" and drew a question mark over both to show she didn't understand what the student was trying to say. She added one word in the first paragraph, and changed one word for another in the last paragraph. In three different places she wrote "plural" or "spelling" over a word to show they were written incorrectly and how they should be fixed. She wrote four marginal comments/questions, such as, "be more specific" or "What is the difference in performance?" She wrote one end comment telling the student the essay was disorganized, and gave him/her suggestions on how to rewrite the essay better by working on their transition sentences and by giving more specific information to support their point of view.

In the follow-up interview, I asked Julia to look at the two sets of responses she gave to the SSE and elaborate on her reasons for the differences. She said she didn't make as many grammar corrections the second time she responded to the essay compared to the first time because of a heated discussion with a classmate from English 6030 about an article they were required to read for the class by Hartwell, "Grammar, Grammars and The Teaching of Grammar." They discussed whether or not focusing on grammar was important and between what this classmate said and what was discussed in class that night, she realized she was focusing too much on grammar corrections and wasn't really paying attention to what the student

was actually saying. From then on, she made it a point to carefully read the paper first and try to understand what the student was trying to say rather than pinpoint all of the errors first.

I believe the experiences Julia encountered throughout the semester in English 6030 have helped her to realize that not only pointing out the error, but writing exactly what was wrong with it, was not the correct way of "helping" her students. I believe she learned that students need to figure some things out for themselves, and that her main focus when correcting her students' assignments is to look for the message they are trying to convey.

In this chapter, I analyzed each instrument separately and came up with the number and examples of the categories. In the following chapter I discuss the results by comparing the questionnaires and the sample student essay from the first to the second time they were administered.

Chapter V Discussion of Results

The purpose of this thesis was to observe changes in the way students from English 6030 provide feedback after having completed the course and to determine what influenced them to make these changes. To be able to observe in what ways their perceptions changed and determine what factors influenced those changes, I collected data using various instruments including questionnaires, an anonymous student essay, class observations, and interviews with both the professor and the participants. This chapter contains a discussion based on the comparisons made between the first and second administration of the instruments, specifically regarding the order of importance they gave to certain aspects of writing, what their focus would be if they were to teach a writing course, their expectations for English 6030 and if these were met, their focus of corrections to the SSE, and the comments provided on the SSE.

Questionnaires

The demographic information from the questionnaires allowed me to understand the backgrounds of the individuals who were participating in the course and this helped me to understand the context in which the learning took place. All of the participants but one were teaching freshman composition, intermediate ESL, or public school at the time of this study. Of the participants that were teaching, their experience in the educational field was limited to 1 to 5 years except for one participant who had been teaching over 14 years. Because all had some teaching experience, I could assume that they were entering the class with prior beliefs and judgments about how to teach writing.

Order of Importance to Response Areas

The data from the questionnaires showed the importance the participants gave to content, organization, style, grammar and mechanics. I asked the participants to rank these aspects of writing in order to find out how important each area was for them. At the beginning of the course, the majority of the participants chose content as the most important aspect they focused on when responding to their students' writing assignments, followed by organization, style and grammar, and finally by mechanics. Participants had a fairly good idea of what to focus on at the beginning of the course. After completing the course, there was minimal change. The participants continued to emphasize content and organization with very high percentages in both categories. Style remained the same, while mechanics appeared to be of even less importance in the second questionnaire. Grammar made a slight shift in importance. Perhaps this slight change in grammar was because it was an area of discussion in the course. Even the slightest shift in the order of importance the participants gave each aspect of writing may indicate a change in their knowledge structure in some way and may be related to the change they made in correcting the second essay. A comparison of the results from this question in POW 1 and POW 2 are shown in Table 18.

Table 18. Comparison of Order of Importance from POW 1 and POW 2

	Content		Organization		Style		Grammar		Mechanics	
	POW 1	POW 2	POW 1	POW 2	POW 1	POW 2	POW 1	POW 2	POW 1	POW 2
Most important	**83%**	**73%**	8%	0%	8%	27%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	8%	18%	**67%**	**82%**	17%	0%	8%	0%	0%	0%
	8%	0%	25%	18%	**42%**	**46%**	25%	18%	0%	18%
	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	18%	**42%**	**73%**	50%	9%
Least important	0%	9%	0%	0%	25%	9%	25%	9%	**50%**	**73%**

Participants' Beliefs about How to Teach Writing

From the data I found in the first questionnaire, I could see that the participants in this class had specific beliefs about how to teach writing. The interview data showed that participants see themselves as a guide to their students, providing them with writing examples based on what they are learning at the time, and then they allow the students to write building on the examples discussed. Only a few of the participants wrote that they allow their students to write freely and as often as possible for more practice.

In the POW 1 and POW 2 questionnaires, the participants were asked what their focus would be if they were to teach a writing course at that time. From their responses, I concluded that the participants want to focus their writing classes on having students produce ideas that will help them improve their L2 writing and communication skills. They want their students to be aware of what they are doing when they write and keep in mind who they are writing for, while at the same time focusing on getting their message across, all within an organized manner. The answers to these questions coincide with what the participants chose as the most important aspects they focus on when correcting their students' writing assignments: content and organization are the most important aspects when writing. Students did, however, bring in new ideas that they had learned from the class such as audience awareness and teaching specific genres. Table 19 compares the answers provided by the participants.

Table 19. Comparison of Table 5 and Table 13: Focus of Writing Course

Participant #	POW 1	POW 2
1	• content • to communicate freely	• ABSENT
2	• at first organization, grammar and mechanics	• content, style, structure, mechanics

Table 19. Comparison of Table 5 and Table 13: Focus of Writing Course

Participant #	POW 1	POW 2
	• then content and original thought	
3	• critical thinking • discourse community • what makes a good paper • practice	• content, organization, coherence, styles
4	• express ideas on paper • start with an idea for a topic • then develop the process • organization, grammar, style, mechanics, content	• content and organization
5	• practice and gaining confidence • freedom and encouragement • praising and correction	• levels of formality • make students aware of their audience, purpose, tone, style, and vocabulary • then content, structure, and then revision
6	• focus on what they have and how to develop it • then mechanics	• introduce the different kinds of genres • explain and search for previous knowledge • begin writing to improve student's skills
7	• organize their ideas • main idea and content • style • grammar	• different types of genres
8	• content and organization	• organization of ideas
9	• topics that interest the students	• generating ideas

Table 19. Comparison of Table 5 and Table 13: Focus of Writing Course

Participant #	POW 1	POW 2
	• peer review • focus on what needs work, not correct the paper	• translating those ideas into writing
10	• putting ideas on paper • organization • grammar and mechanics	• focus on differences between reasons for writing
11	• eliminate the fear of writing • revision	• conferencing • student-centered
12	• express themselves • develop and organize ideas	• communication of ideas • style

Considering whether the expectations the participants had at the beginning of the course were met at the end of the course, I found that the participants all agreed their expectations had been met and then some. When the course began, some participants wrote they were hoping to improve their own writing, but the majority of the participants were hoping to improve as writing teachers since most of them were Teaching Assistants. At the end of the course, these participants wrote that they learned a lot about teaching writing and the theories and techniques involved in assessing their students' writing. They felt better prepared as writing teachers, and therefore, the participants' expectations were met. Some participants mentioned specific aspects of the class that helped them improve as writing teachers, such as assessment, portfolios, writing conferences, error correction, teacher feedback, and peer revision. When comparing the responses the participants gave in the first questionnaire to those given in the second questionnaire, these show that all of the participants demonstrated change in knowledge about writing. Table 20 compares the answers provided by the participants.

Table 20. Comparison of Table 3 and Table 10: Expectations of the Participants

Participant #	POW 1	POW 2
1	• update my teaching on composition and improve my own writing	• ABSENT
2	• learn to diagnose the problem ESL students are having and how to approach them • learn specific strategies in dealing with students' needs	• Yes, the class was interactive, and dealt with everyday issues
3	• to be a better writer	• Yes, I improved as a writer, and learned from the readings
4	• how to introduce, develop, and engage writing in a classroom	• Yes, I learned much theory
5	• learn different views on teaching and learning composition • to become a better teacher	• Yes, more than expected
6	• be more aware of the writing process and how as a teacher to introduce her students to it and allow them to develop their skills	• Yes, now I know more about how to teach, assess and correct essays
7	• understand better the writing process • to become a better writer • understand the study of writing and how it affects students and teachers	• Yes, it cleared doubts I had before the class and now I am interested in other aspects of writing
8	• be more aware of the difficulties students face when writing	• Yes, I learned many theories and techniques to apply and mold my

Table 20. Comparison of Table 3 and Table 10: Expectations of the Participants

Participant #	POW 1	POW 2
		own teaching philosophy
9	• learn better methods of teaching writing composition and help define my own teaching philosophy	• Yes, more than expected, I learned about conferencing and post processes
10	• learn about the ideologies of writing and teaching of writing • learn about my own writing	• Yes, I learned about composition, writing, and the teaching of it • I wish I could have taken the course earlier
11	• learning techniques on how to come up with innovative writing tasks for my students to make their writing experiences more entertaining	• Yes, now I have a different idea about the theory of composition
12	• theory behind writing	• Yes, it was worth it

How Participants Showed Change through their Practice

The questionnaires and the interviews provided information on the growth of their knowledge bases about how to teach writing and how to respond to it. The essays they corrected at the beginning and end of the semester provided information on their practice and showed me whether they had integrated their knowledge into their practice of responding.

Sample Student Essay

The purpose of the essays was to observe changes in the way the participants corrected and gave feedback to a writing assignment at the beginning and at the end of English 6030.

When comparing the essays the participants corrected at the beginning of the semester to the essays they corrected at the end of the semester, I found differences and similarities in all of them. The areas of difference in response and corrections include the number of corrections, how they made them, and the types of comments provided.

Number of Corrections

In the first response to the SSE, every participant except one made some form of correction on the essay. The majority of these corrections were focused on grammatical errors. In the second response to the SSE, every participant except two made some form of correction to the essay. The majority of these corrections were also focused on grammatical errors, just as in the first response to the SSE. When comparing the number of corrections made by each of the participants individually between the two sets of responses to the SSE, I found that some of them made roughly the same number of corrections on both sets of responses, while a few others made considerably fewer corrections in the second response to the SSE. In this form of comparison, I found the difference to be very little. On the other hand, when I compared the total number of corrections made to the first response to the SSE (266 corrections) to the total number of corrections made to the second response to the SSE (148 corrections), I found there were considerably fewer corrections made to the second response to the SSE. Through this comparison, it is clear that changes occurred in practice. Table 21 shows a comparison of the corrections made to the two sets of responses to the SSE, the number of times they made these corrections, and the total number of corrections per essay.

Table 21. Comparison of Table 6 and Table 14: Focus of Corrections to SSE

Participant #	First Response to SSE		Second Response to SSE	
	Focus of corrections	# of times	Focus of corrections	# of times
1	grammar	11	ABSENT	

Table 21. Comparison of Table 6 and Table 14: Focus of Corrections to SSE

Participant #	First Response to SSE		Second Response to SSE	
	Focus of corrections	**# of times**	**Focus of corrections**	**# of times**
	added words	1		
	punctuation	4		
	capitalization	1		
	indentation	1		
2	grammar	18	grammar	17
	punctuation	3	punctuation	3
3	MADE NO CORRECTIONS		grammar	6
			added words	2
			changed words	3
4	grammar	18	grammar	16
	added words	2	added words	4
	changed words	2	changed words	1
	indentation	5		
5	grammar	18	grammar	15
	added words	7	added words	5
	changed words	5	changed words	3
	deleted words	4	indentation	3
	capitalization	3	paragraph spacing	1
	indentation	1		
	paragraph spacing	1		
6	grammar	21	grammar	8
	added words	4	added words	2
	capitalization	2		
	punctuation	6		
7	grammar	5	MADE NO CORRECTIONS	
	added words	3		
	deleted words	1		
	punctuation	3		

Table 21. Comparison of Table 6 and Table 14: Focus of Corrections to SSE

Participant #	First Response to SSE		Second Response to SSE	
	Focus of corrections	**# of times**	**Focus of corrections**	**# of times**
8	grammar	17	grammar	5
	punctuation	2	punctuation	5
	indentation	5	changed words	5
9	grammar	11	grammar	9
	changed words	8	changed words	2
	added words	6	added words	3
	deleted words	3	punctuation	2
	punctuation	7		
	capitalization	2		
	indentation	5		
10	grammar	19	grammar	16
	added words	7	added words	1
	changed words	3	deleted words	1
	deleted words	1	punctuation	2
	punctuation	7	capitalization	1
	capitalization	1		
11	grammar	1	MADE NO CORRECTIONS	
	indentation	2		
	paragraph spacing	1		
12	grammar	8	grammar	7
Totals		**266**		**148**

How the Participants Corrected the Essays

When I looked at *how* the participants corrected the essays, I found very little difference between the two sets of responses to the SSE in the way they pointed out the errors to the writer. Some participants corrected the errors *directly,* for example, by writing what was missing or the

correct way of writing it. Others corrected the errors *indirectly*, for example, by pointing out the error with a circle or by underlining the word or words. The manner in which the participants responded to the SSE, however small the difference, indicates that a change in their own theoretical perspective may have occurred.

The ways they corrected the errors were consistent between the two responses to the essays. Only three participants changed the way they corrected them. One participant made no corrections in her first response to the essay, but made corrections in the second response to the essay (grammatical and added/changed words). The other two participants did the opposite, making corrections in their first response to the essay but none in their second response to the essay. Perhaps these three were the participants who were unsure after taking the class about the correct way to deal with grammatical errors on a student's paper. The lack of change in this area may indicate that most participants felt comfortable with their style or manner of making corrections and did not see the need to change their practice. It may also indicate that at the level of knowledge, there was not enough explanation during the class and thus, not enough learning to affect their practice. For example, as a participant observing the class, I recall a class discussion that gave the participants suggestions on other ways to correct their students' writing by using codes. Yet, not a single participant used any of these codes when they corrected the essay the second time. However, the participants were not provided with an actual coding system that they were able to practice with during the class time. In other words, the participants were introduced to the possibility of using a code system, but it was not emphasized as an important point for consideration.

Types of Comments Provided

When looking over the marginal comments, I found that in the first response to the essay, most of the marginal comments were suggestions the participants made to the writer on how to revise specific areas of the essay. Other marginal comments were in the form of questions, eliciting further information from the writer in order to enhance the essay further. Four participants gave some form of positive feedback to the writer. One participant did not write any marginal comments. In the second response to the essay, just as in the first response, the majority of the marginal comments were suggestions to the writer. Other comments included questions about a certain area of the essay. In the second response to the essay, only one participant gave the writer a positive remark. Three participants did not write any marginal comments.

During the follow-up interview with Beth, she explained that someone had told her she shouldn't stop to write comments in the margins while she was reading a writing assignment because it interrupts the flow of ideas, and the message the writer is trying to convey will not come across the way the writer intended. Perhaps this comment was made to her by a fellow classmate from English 6030. Teachers are not always clear about what the best practices are for responding and if they do not have the time to practice in their courses on writing, they may rely on "lore" from other teachers whom they believe have more experience (North, 1987).

When I compared the marginal comments made by each of the participants individually between the two sets of responses to the SSE, I found there wasn't a significant difference. However, when I compared the number of marginal comments the participants provided in the first response to the SSE (35 marginal comments) to the second response to the SSE (26 marginal comments), I found there were fewer marginal comments in the second response to the essay. Table 22 compares the types of marginal comments the participants provided in the two

sets of responses to the SSE, the number of times each type of comment was provided, and the

total number of marginal comments per essay.

Table 22. Comparison of Table 8 and Table 16: Marginal Comments

Participant #	First Response to SSE		Second Response to SSE	
	Type of comment	# of times	Type of comment	# of times
1	suggestion	1	ABSENT	
2	positive feedback	1	suggestion	2
	question	1	positive feedback	2
3	question	1	question	2
	positive feedback	1		
4	suggestion	1	NO MARGINAL COMMENTS	
	cause of error	1		
5	cause of error	1	NO MARGINAL COMMENTS	
	suggestion	1		
6	positive feedback	1	suggestion	3
	suggestion	1		
	question	1		
7	suggestion	1	NO MARGINAL COMMENTS	
	question	2		
8	suggestion	4	suggestion	1
	question	4	question	2
			confusion	1
9	question	2	question	2
	suggestion	2	suggestion	2
10	question	1	question	1
	suggestion	3	suggestion	3
	positive feedback	1		
11	"grammar hints"	1	suggestion	4

Table 22. Comparison of Table 8 and Table 16: Marginal Comments

Participant #	First Response to SSE		Second Response to SSE	
	Type of comment	# of times	Type of comment	# of times
	suggestion	1		
12	NO MARGINAL COMMENTS		cause of error	1
Totals		**35**		**26**

In the first response to the essay, as far as the end comments are concerned, most of the partcipants used that space to write suggestions to the student on how to improve the essay. Many of the participants wrote positive comments to the writer about the essay, except one participant who wrote a discouraging comment at the end of the essay. Two participants did not write any end comments in their first response to the essay. In the second response to the essay, just as in the first response, the majority of the end comments were suggestions for improving the essay as a whole. Three participants did not write any end comments in their second response to the essay, even though they had written end comments in their first response to the essay. In other words, different readers responded to writing in different ways. Sperling (1994) showed us in her study discussed in Chapter 2 on how one teacher responded to her students' writing in five different ways. In this thesis study, twelve different readers responded in many different ways to the same essay. Since individual responses varied from participant to participant, it is difficult to pinpoint a reason for the differences between the end comments on one essay and the end comments on another essay.

When I compared the end comments made by each of the participants individually between the two sets of responses to the SSE, I found there wasn't a significant difference. However, when I compared the number of end comments the participants provided in the first response to the SSE (39 end comments) to the second response to the SSE (21 end comments), I

found there were fewer end comments in the second response to the essay. Table 23 compares the types of end comments the participants provided in the two sets of responses to the SSE, the number of times each type of comment was provided, and the total number of end comments per essay.

Table 23. Comparison of Table 9 and Table 17: End Comments

Participant #	First Response to SSE		Second Response to SSE	
	Type of comment	# of times	Type of comment	# of times
1	positive feedback	1	ABSENT	
	suggestion	1		
2	suggestion	2	suggestion	3
	positive feedback	2	positive feedback	1
3	positive feedback	1	suggestion	1
	suggestion	3		
4	positive feedback	1	NO END COMMENTS	
	suggestion	4		
5	positive feedback	1	NO END COMMENTS	
	suggestion	3		
6	suggestion	2	positive feedback	1
			suggestion	3
7	positive feedback	1	suggestion	2
	suggestion	3		
8	NO END COMMENTS		negative feedback	1
			suggestion	2
9	NO END COMMENTS		suggestion	2
10	suggestion	2	suggestion	1
			positive feedback	1
11	positive feedback	1	NO END COMMENTS	
	suggestion	4		

12	negative feedback	4	negative feedback	2
	suggestion	3	suggestion	1
Totals		**39**		**21**

Professor Interviews

In the first interview with the professor, she stated that her goals for the semester were for the participants to understand what is involved in teaching writing by exploring theory and practice in hopes that they could create their own teaching philosophy, while practicing their own writing. In her second interview she reported that although the participants did a lot of writing, reading, and discussion of theory, she felt the participants did not have sufficient opportunities to put what they learned into practice, especially in the areas of error correction and feedback. Perhaps given the opportunity to practice what they learned about error correction and feedback, more participants might have demonstrated more changes in the way they corrected the essay used for this study. This demonstrates that practice is an important element of learning in a theoretical course.

Dialogic Logs

The purpose of collecting data from the dialogic logs written by the participants was to acquire more data in the form of reports that they might not have expressed in the other instruments used for this study. In these dialogic logs, I found the participants commented that although grammar is an important part of correcting students' writing, it shouldn't be the main focus of the corrections. When I compared these comments to what the participants focused on when they corrected the essays, I found they continued to focus mainly on grammatical errors. Even though the participants learned through various readings and discussions in class that grammar should not be the main focus when correcting their students' writing assignments, it

seems "addictive" as Mary stated in her follow-up interview. She said it is a habit that was difficult to break. Her report indicates that she may not be sure about her beliefs regarding the importance of grammar in responding to writing. Correcting student errors is what language teachers do and coming from an ESL background, she may have had her errors corrected on her own papers. Saying that it was a "habit," accentuated the habitual use of grammar correction as a

common practice when responding to student writing and even though the course offered the participants other ways to view grammar corrections, it is an "addiction" that is too difficult to break.

Interviews with Participants

The purpose of the interviews with the participants was to find out more about them as students and writing teachers and about their knowledge of writing. From these interviews I found that the participants feel the best way for students to become better writers is simply by practicing their writing whenever they get the opportunity. They believe that students should brainstorm their ideas and organize them into an outline, and then begin writing, following this outline while focusing primarily on content and organization. The participants consider themselves facilitators and guides when it comes to teaching. They provide their students with models of the writing assignment they want their students to follow. They discuss with their students the basic parts and emphasize what is expected of them, and then allow them to write. The participants review, correct, and provide feedback on the assignment because, as all of them reported, feedback is extremely important.

I compared the responses the participants gave in their early interviews and the answers to the question from the first questionnaire that asked how the participants teach their students

writing. Participants gave similar answers to both. The participants want their students to improve their writing; therefore, they provide them with other examples of writing and offer their students ample opportunities to practice. If they make mistakes, the participants as their teachers are there to guide them in figuring out what mistakes they have made and how to revise them.

Follow-up Interviews

Four of the original twelve participants made significant changes between the two sets of responses to the SSE. I interviewed these four participants in order to obtain a more in-depth look at the changes that they made from the first response to the essay to the second response and to determine what happened during the semester that may have influenced them to make these changes. These follow-up interviews were pivotal in answering my research questions.

My first research question was, "In what ways do the participants' views on responding to writing change after completing the course?" I found that these four participants made positive changes in the way they respond to their students' writing. In the first response to the SSE, the participants focused so much on the grammatical errors that they failed to notice that "the main problem the essay had was lack of a strong thesis statement and disorganized supporting details," as Beth reported in her follow-up interview. After reviewing the two sets of responses to the essay, along with all the additional data from the questionnaires, interviews and class observations, I found the participants reported various changes, therefore answering my first research question.

The first change the participants reported was that they carefully choose the writing assignment they give their students and how they are going to teach their students how to work

with it. John reported in his interview that he approaches his students and the writing assignments he gives with more consideration now, keeping in mind what his main focus is.

The second change the participants reported was that they focus more on the message the student is trying to convey in their writing instead of zoning in on every minute detail when it comes to error correction. Beth reported that now when she reads her student's writing assignments, she first reads it over to understand what the student is saying, and then she goes over it again to check what areas need to improve.

The last change the participants reported was that they provide better feedback that helps the student to improve their writing rather than inhibit them. John reported that before taking the class his comments used to be "dry", but after taking the class he explained that he tries to write comments that are more meaningful to the student. Mary also reported she writes "friendlier" comments when she corrects her students' writing because when teachers "come on too strong, the student holds back". She said friendlier feedback obtains better results.

My second research question was, "What aspects of English 6030 helped the participants in their improvements to teacher feedback?" What drove these participants to change the way they provided feedback to the essay I gave them? The participants mentioned many aspects of the class that influenced them to change the way they provide feedback, therefore answering my second research question. Two of the four participants, John and Mary, mentioned learning about rubrics during the semester and how they made correcting their students' writing assignments easier and fairer. These rubrics gave the participants the opportunity to see that they were paying too much attention to the grammatical errors the essays might have while taking the attention away from other factors that needed equal amounts of consideration, such as content and organization.

In addition to the rubrics, these participants mentioned specific articles discussed in class that had a strong impact on their views toward feedback and/or writing in general. John mentioned an article by Kastman (2002), "Post-Process Pedagogy: A Philosophical Exercise" that made him realize there is a difference between the "act" and the "process" of writing. This made him view his students' writing in a different way. Beth mentioned a presentation she gave with another classmate on correction codes that she obtained from an article they had found and used for a presentation they gave on error correction and learner perceptions in L2 Spanish writing. Beth said that the article helped her to realize she didn't have to "crucify" the assignment she was correcting. She would discuss beforehand the list of correction codes with her students, and then apply them to the assignment when she was correcting it. Beth said this would help her to divide her attention equally among all of the aspects that needed correcting in her students' writing. Julia mentioned the Hartwell (1985) article, "Grammar, Grammars and the Teaching of Grammar," that sparked a heated discussion with a fellow classmate about whether focusing on grammar was important or not. It lead her to understand that she was focusing too much on grammatical errors when correcting her students' writing assignments and was not understanding the true message the writer was trying to get across.

Finally, the saying goes that imitation is the best form of flattery. John told me he learned to focus more on what students are trying to say in their writing rather than focusing on grammatical errors from how the professor from English 6030 corrected the participants' writing assignments. He said the professor would comment on the *content* of the writing assignment. That showed him that she took the time to understand the message the writer was conveying. As a student, that made him feel that what he was writing was meaningful and it gave him an incentive to continue writing. As Mary said in her interview, the teacher has to know *how* to

approach the student. If they come on too strong, it will inhibit the student and the final product will only be worse.

After analyzing all of the data collected from these instruments, I can conclude that when teachers become students and enter a learning environment, the process of acquiring new information, adopting it as their own, and applying it to their own teaching experiences vary greatly among them. These changes in their teaching philosophy occur for a number of reasons. In a study conducted by Richardson and Anders (1994), they found that when evaluating teacher change 1) teachers are more aware of their ways of thinking, 2) teachers do not change in the same ways, and 3) teachers change for different reasons. In addition to these findings, I can add that teachers do not change at the same time. It may take time for teachers to accept and adapt their new way of thinking, and the amount of time it may take for one teacher may be different for another teacher, if change occurs at all. When evaluating the participants in this study, these ideas must be kept in mind. The participants must become aware of the new ideas being presented to them in class, the ways in which they changed are not the same for all of them, and the reasons for their changes vary from participant to participant. Teachers have to make decisions about what they want to change and why. When teachers decide they want to try a new activity in their classroom, they adapt it only if it gives them the results they want. According to Richardson and Anders, "new practices and procedures are adopted by teachers if they appear to work" (p. 159). They have to be consistent with the teacher's philosophy, be interesting for the student, and still allow the teacher to feel they are in control of the situation. Also, teachers need time to change. Perhaps some of the participants are still contemplating what they learned in class and will apply this knowledge later on in their teaching experiences.

Chapter VI Conclusions

The objectives of this thesis were to 1) observe changes in the way students view feedback to writing after completing English 6030: Theory and Practice of Composition and 2) determine what aspects of the course helped them to change their views on feedback to writing. At the end of this study, I can draw five major conclusions.

First, participants' views on the important aspects they focus on when correcting their students' writing did not change significantly after having taken the course. They continued to show that content and organization were the most important areas of focus with a slight change in the emphasis put on grammar. However, their practice changed as shown by the differences between the two sets of responses to the SSE. The second time fewer corrections, fewer marginal comments, and fewer end comments were made. The class readings, discussions, and activities must have had some effect on the way they viewed response and correction to L2 writing.

Second, changes reported by the four embedded case studies on their views on feedback include: 1) choosing carefully the writing assignments given to students and how they will be presented, 2) focusing more on the message of the writer and less on grammatical errors, and 3) providing better feedback by writing comments that would help the writer produce a better draft. The case studies also showed that students had more depth of understanding and that they had been exposed to topics about writing that had made them question and rethink their own teaching practices in an ESL context.

Third, specific aspects of the class sparked these changes in the participants, including: 1) exposure to rubrics, 2) articles and class discussions on error correction, feedback, peer revision, conferencing, assessment, and portfolios, and 3) the way the professor corrected their writing.

This finding shows that students do benefit from courses, but that individual differences occur in how the material is received and used by students.

Fourth, the expectations that a professor has for her graduate students and what actually happens in the class will have some effect on the learning outcomes of the students and this will affect their practice. The professor wanted the participants to learn about the theory of teaching writing and be able to practice what they learned, but the semester only allowed enough time for the theoretical aspects of teaching writing, and as a result the participants did not get the practice they needed. This may indicate that there should be a balance between theory and practice.

Fifth, the participants said in their dialogic logs that they try not to focus so much on grammar, yet the essays demonstrate the contrary. This indicates a mismatch between knowledge awareness and practice. Although the participants did make fewer corrections the second time they responded to the SSE, these corrections continued to be mostly focused on grammar. It seems that when it comes to correcting students' writing, grammar correction is so engrained in our mind, it becomes a habit that is difficult to break. It may also indicate that while too many grammar corrections are not good and can confuse the writer, teachers believe that students need to notice their errors in order to make an effort to write clear, correct English. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the results from Garcia's study (2003) indicate that error correction provides more opportunities for learners to notice their errors. On the other hand, Ferris (2003) offers explicit directions for teachers to follow that help reduce the number of corrections by focusing on the most salient and repeated errors in a composition first. This is the dilemma in which most ESL teachers find themselves and the reason why research needs to continue to find out about the effects of grammar correction on ESL writing and its improvement.

The ways in which these participants change can be compared to the results from the studies conducted by Pennington (1994) and Richardson and Anders (1994). The authors stated that lasting teacher change can only be achieved if there is a change in knowledge (awareness) on the part of the teacher regarding a need for change and a desire to experiment (practice) with available alternatives before actually making any changes. The changes in awareness can be observed in the data from the two questionnaires. The changes in practice can be observed in the responses to the two sets of essays. The change in both awareness and practice can be observed in the data collected from the follow-up interviews conducted with the four participants that demonstrated the most change.

Students enroll in a class to learn new ideas and hopefully apply them, whether it is in a professional or personal sense. These students come into a learning environment with different life experiences, and therefore, what they go through during the class is different for each of them. From my observations throughout this study, I found there are two types of students. Some students take more time to adapt to new situations. These students learn about a new concept, study and analyze it, and decide either not to adapt it to their own teaching philosophies or save the information acquired and decide it might be something to consider later on. The second type is open to new ideas and applies them immediately. These are the students that take a new concept, study and analyze it, try to integrate it into the knowledge they already have, and use it whenever possible before keeping it for good or discarding it.

Because some students did not show change I cannot assume that some participants are resisting it. According to Richardson and Anders (1994) teachers sometimes resist ideas that come from *outside* their teaching environment. In other words, if someone outside the classroom environment tells them they should put into practice a certain approach, the teacher might resist

because that person is deciding its importance and not the teacher. In the case of graduate writing course a student may not be in agreement with the philosophy or teaching strategies of the professor and this may make change more difficult if it occurs at all. Perhaps the participants in whom I did not observe significant change were not influenced enough by the presentations in the class.

Out of twelve participants, a change was observed in four of them. These participants fall into the second category of students. They began the semester with certain views and ways of providing feedback, and during the course of the semester they obtained certain knowledge that helped them to change the way they viewed feedback. These changes were observed in the differences between the two essays they corrected and from the follow-up interviews. As for the remaining participants, change in their knowledge awareness was observed although they didn't demonstrate a significant change in practice. Perhaps these participants are still in the process of considering the theories they learned about in class and deciding if they want to adapt them to their own teaching philosophies to later apply them in their own teaching experiences.

The professor of the class gave students a reading at the beginning of the course titled "Communities of Practice" from the book by E. Wenger (1999). The chapter explains that in any field or practice there is a time when one enters and works as an apprentice, practicing the skills and participating in the activities of that field until one becomes a full fledged member. The participants of this writing course were in the process of becoming members of a teaching community, a community of writing teachers who work with ESL students. In taking the course they were in a sense apprentices who have gained knowledge and have had some experience participating in a pedagogy based on the most recent research in the field of ESL writing. Hopefully the knowledge and practice has brought them closer to being part of a group of

knowledgeable teachers who have learned some sound techniques in responding to writing and can work to address the needs of their ESL students.

Limitations of the Study

This study was restricted in a number of ways. First of all, this short term study was conducted over only one semester. As a result, the long term effects the course might have had on the participants cannot be measured. In addition, while I observed the changes in knowledge and practice while participating in the course, I did not consider that all but one of the participants was teaching ESL courses and a number were teaching ESL writing courses as Teaching Assistants. They may have practiced the techniques from their graduate class in their own classes without my knowledge, therefore affecting how they responded to what they learned in the course. It is probable that the participants did put into practice some of the techniques form the class, but there was no way to document this as it was not considered part of the investigation

Another limitation is that the study was conducted with twelve participants. Case study research gives an in depth look at a specific case, but fails to be able to make generalizations to other populations. In this sense the study was limited to the class with its 12 participants and the professor. A further limitation was that only four of the twelve participants were interviewed because of the changes I observed in their knowledge and practice. I did not interview the participants who demonstrated change in only knowledge to find out why they did *not* change in practice, leaving an area left unstudied.

A final limitation was that I did not construct an attitude scale to see whether the participants changed in their attitudes toward teacher response. An instrument such as this might have been more valid for recording student change, especially regarding something that affects

their beliefs or attitudes toward teaching, although evidence from practice is more valuable in showing change.

Pedagogical Implications

The people involved in designing the curriculum of any educational program worry about what the students are learning from the courses they offer. They are concerned about whether or not the students are acquiring the necessary knowledge they will need to perform better at whatever it is they do. The participants of this study learned about the theoretical aspects of teaching writing but were not able to put what they learned into practice. Teachers today spend a significant amount of time correcting their students' writing assignments. Therefore, theoretical knowledge is not enough. Students need more time to practice responding techniques.

This was a study about the training of teachers and how course materials and activities affect how they will later work with their own students. It is important to know how future teachers will use the information they receive, how they negotiate it into their belief system, and how they organize their teaching around it. One implication from this study is that students in graduate courses need time to reflect on their learning and use critical thinking in making judgments about how they will practice what they have learned. Another implication shows that students need to practice and put into action the ideas and concepts they have learned in a class before they use them with their own students. As stated before, the participants in this study did not have ample practice time and this may have affected the way they responded on the final essay. Perhaps students taking the writing courses should all be Teaching Assistants of ESL writing courses and the knowledge bases from the class could be applied immediately to the courses they are teaching.

Recommendations for Future Research

As with any investigative project, future research is needed to add to the knowledge acquired in this study. For example, this thesis only studied the short term effects the class had on the participants. Therefore, the long term effects a course like English 6030 may have on the students should be studied to observe changes that may occur later on as a result of the experiences the students may have gone through during the semester. I believe it would be interesting to meet with these same participants in the future and administer the essay once again to find out if 1) those that changed their views on feedback have continued correcting their students' writing assignments in the manner they said they would after having taken the course or if they went back to their original way of providing feedback and 2) the remaining participants continued to provide feedback in the manner they were during the semester or if they decided later on to change, and if so, in what ways.

An experimental research study could be designed to measure knowledge change in students before and after lessons on how to respond to student writing. This way experimental research could be used along side qualitative research to provide depth into the cases and breadth across populations.

Third, I only interviewed the participants that demonstrated the most change between the two essays. Other studies that follow the design used in this thesis should interview *all* of the participants, regardless of whether or not they observed changes in the participants. It might be interesting to find out the reasons why the remaining participants did not change the way they provide feedback.

Finally, a study should be designed that looks not only at what the participants do when correcting students' writing, but the changes in attitude they may have towards feedback as well. A study that focuses on these two aspects of writing can give researchers a broader picture as to what teachers go through when they correct their students' writing assignments.

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Appendix A Consent form

I, _____, agree to voluntarily participate in a thesis study on ***TEACHER CHANGE IN THE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF RESPONDING TO ESL STUDENT WRITING*** conducted by Pauline Torres, a Graduate student at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez. I understand that my name will not be used when discussing the results of this study.

_____
Signature

_____
Date

Appendix B Class Syllabus

University of Puerto Rico
Mayagüez Campus
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Department of English

1st semester 2006-2007

INGL 6030: Theory and Practice of Composition

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Practice in the techniques of writing
Study of its research and theory.

This course is designed to provide a theoretical framework for the teaching of composition. A review of the history of composition, the ideologies driving that history, and the current debates in the discipline will provide new writing teachers with frameworks and tools to imagine, analyze, and strengthen their pedagogies. The second part of the course explores the practice of composition in light of the questions raised in the first part and looks at important practices to include in your classes such as peer review, one-to-one conferencing, assessing writing, error correction, and technology and the composition classroom. Students will be responsible for initiating and carrying out class discussions as well as researching and preparing a class on a topic related to composition.

The GOALS for this course are for you to:
- become familiar with the theory, research, and practice of writing instruction with native speakers and ESL writers.
- become acquainted with theoretical perspectives that will guide your pedagogical decisions about texts, writing assignments, assessment and your classroom teaching.
- use research to make knowledgeable decisions about what is best for your students as writers as well as to offer you ideas about possible research and thesis topics you might wish to explore.
- develop as a writer and as a critical and reflective teacher of writing.

TEXTBOOK: Villanueva, Victor. (2003). *Cross Talk in Composition Theory*. NCTE
Available in the bookstore. In syllabus (CT)

Assigned readings from other texts and journals are available in a packet at SAEG and in the library. In syllabus (RP)

GRADES The grade for this course depends on your participation in the following assignments and tasks for the course.

Tasks and assignments include the following:
1. Complete a dialogic learning log for each day of class. By the end of the semester you will have 15 log entries that your peer group has read and responded to. Details follow.

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2. You will be responsible for leading class discussion for one of the readings one night. You will develop thoughtful questions that will be used to engage in a reflective discussion. You will summarize the article/ and give each student a copy of the summary. These can be made available for them on WebCT or on hard copy.

3. Prepare short position papers to have on-hand before class based on the assigned readings for the class that night. In other words, if you are assigned to do three readings for the following week, you will read them and position yourself in regard to what you have read. These papers may be read in class and should, therefore, always be ready before class. You will not be required to write a position for every class. See course schedule for days when position papers are required.

4. Participate in a collaborative research/teaching project with one other member of the course. The products from this project are a publishable research paper on the topic, and class presentation for students that includes some form of teaching it to the other students. For example, if you are going to work on peer review, you will find the resources, read and annotate your resources, prepare a paper on your topic and, in collaboration with your partner and myself, decide what are the most important points for the entire class to become acquainted with and prepare a guided student-centered activity for the class. In sum, you will be the teachers of this class for one evening.

5. Write an initial self-assessment in the form of a literacy narrative (see below) and a final self-assessment that looks at the work you did over the semester and how it has influenced you as a teacher of writing (Instructions for final assessment will come later).

Assignment One: Personal Literacy Narrative

The **Personal literacy narrative** is often assigned at the beginning of first year writing classes as a way for the teacher to get to know the students and also as an invitation to the students to think of themselves as writers and to consider the factors that helped to form their academic self-image. To begin this course, I'd like you to write your own literacy narratives, for the same reasons and also as a first step in your process of imagining yourselves as composition teachers. Think about your history as a writer, reader, and thinker. The guidelines below come directly from an undergraduate writing syllabus

(1) *As a generative process*: Write out answers to any of the following questions that seem relevant (but consider all of them): when did you learn to write? who taught you? when did you learn to read? who taught you? how did you feel about reading and writing? how much do you remember family members reading and writing as you were growing up? how much do you remember them encouraging (or discouraging) your reading and writing? what role did school play in your developing literacy? teachers? friends? members of your community, church, extended family, etc.? what setbacks did you encounter? what encouragements? who or what has been the single most important influence on your literacy so far? what is your favorite book? why? who is your favorite book character? why? what advice about writing and reading would you give to a young writer? a writing teacher? the parent of a young child? Feel free to expand on any of these questions and write about anything else that seems relevant.

(2) *As a reflexive process:* Look over your answers paying attention to patterns and connections, and use them to help you organize your narrative. You may find it most helpful to structure the paper thematically, focusing on specific topics (such as good reading experiences, influential people, bad experiences, etc.), or you may prefer to write your narrative chronologically,

describing your evolving literacy over your lifetime. Use whichever structure most makes sense to you (And, yes, you can use "I" and "me" to write about yourself!)

Dialogic Learning Logs

Dialogic learning logs are beneficial in that they help you keep a record of your thoughts and ideas about topics you have read about or have been discussed in class. They are dialogic because other members of your class respond to what you have written with their own ideas. The idea for this type of journal was developed in Mayher, Lester, and Pradl (1983) Learning to Write/Writing to Learn Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton Cook.

LOG FUNCTIONS (These work as heuristics. Do not follow them as a list.)
1. Recording. You write down perceived information or events.
2. Responding. You give reactions to content or events.
3. Questioning. You question the structures, meanings and implications of the subject, posing the questions to yourself further thought or to your response group.
4. Rehearsing. You practice a role or try on a new language by using the jargon, syntax and persona of the discipline.
5. Connecting. You link the content or events of the present subject with previous experiences or learning in the present area or any others.
6. Consolidating. You summarize or interrelate the concepts and systems of the present subject.
7. Anticipating. You speculate on what content and events may come next or where the learning in the discipline is headed.
8. Inventing. You create concepts, insights, relationships and stories that were previously not part of your understanding.
9. Analyzing/Synthesizing the teaching/learning process. You comment on the activities and strategies being used to teach/learn the present subject.
10. Analyzing and synthesizing the composing process. You reflect and detail your own processes of writing the log and other writings in the discipline.
Each log should be written AFTER a class period and BEFORE the next one. Students should not do writing in-class other than to respond to what other writers have written.

How to Write the Position Papers

Position papers follow a fairly rigid formula. They begin with a brief overview of the topic under consideration, or a paraphrase of the thesis of the text/each text and a brief summary of its argument. This is followed by a brief summary of the positions one might adopt in response to the reading(s). All of this should take no more than one single spaced page. You should spend most of your time developing your own position on the subject based on the reading. You can discuss how what you have read helps us understand or rethink the teaching of writing or the texts we have already read, or you can discuss the extent to which you found the reading insightful or helpful. You might critique the topic or the ways these writers respond to it. (Warning: do not respond as if you are the expert and the author is a fool--these texts were all written by scholars and reviewed by many of their peers.) A good position paper provides information and stimulates thought and interesting class discussion: a great presentation inspires your audience to reread the material and may make some of them totally change their perspective on the text.

Research Paper and Class Teaching Day

The research paper is the way for you to learn about your topic. Follow the basic structure for writing a research paper. You will need a minimum of ten references, but hopefully you will go beyond this amount. You should annotate the articles/books and be prepared to give copies of the most important ones to the other students so they will also have references on the topic. Each topic for the papers is in some way related to practice and in your presentation you should have students in our class participating in a manner that will help them to understand the activity. For example, because we should all know how to carry out a good peer review, an example or practice session with a student composition could be done in your presentation. Please do not stand in front of the class giving information to students. Involve them in activities where they can talk, discuss, question, and learn about your topic.

Course Schedule

August 14   Introduction to class, course syllabus, WebCT. Writing activity.
Assignment: Write your personal literary narrative.
Read: Connors " A Brief History of Rhetoric and Composition (Reading Packet)
Wenger, " A Social Theory of Learning" Wenger, Communities of Practice 1998 (Reading Packet) Johns, A. Chapter 1 "Literacy and Pedagogy" (Reading Packet)
August 21 What is literacy? What is composition? How did it come about? How do we become literate? How can theories of teaching and learning help you in teaching composition?
Assignment: Mike Rose, "The Language of Exclusion"   pp. 547-570 (CT)
Bartholomae,   "Inventing the University" pp. 623- 654 (CT)
Shaughnessy "Diving In" pp 311- 317 **Write a position paper on the three readings.**
August 28   What is composition? Who gets to learn and what are we teaching them?
What does Rose mean by exclusionary language? How does it exclude and include?
Bartholomae's essay is a classic in part because of his recognition that student-writers create their perceptions of the university when they write. What does he mean by that? Do you think it's a good thing or a bad thing or a necessary thing? Why? How would Shaughnessy respond? Where do you see yourself in her teacher scheme?
Assignment: Freire "The banking concept of education" from Pedagogy of the Oppressed (on WebCT main page)
Murray, Donald. Teach Writing as Process Not Product pp3-6 (CT)
Emig, "Writing as a mode of learning" pp.7-17 (CT)
September 4 (Labor Day. No class)
September 11 Writing processes and liberatory education.
Presenter/s_____
Assignment: Read **in the following order** Flower and Hayes, " A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing" pp.273-299 and Patricia Bizzell, "Cognition, convention and Certainty: What we Need to Know about Writing" pp. 387-412. **Write a position paper on the two readings.**
September 18 Presenter/s_____
Cognitivist theory on writing and a critique. Discuss positions.
Assignment: Read Bruffee, "Collaborative Learning and the conversation of Mankind"
pp. 415-436 and Santos "Ideology in composition: L1 and ESL" (Reading packet)
September 25   Social Constructionism and ESL writing
Presenter/s_____

Assignment: Read Ede and Lundsford "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked" pp77-95. (CT) and Rafoth, "The Concept of Discourse Community"(Reading Packet)
Elbow, P " Closing my eyes as I speak: An argument for ignoring audience"
October 2 Audience: social and expressivist views
Presnter/s _____
Assignment: : Read Kastman " Post-Process Pedagogy A Philosophical Exercise pp.97-126 (CT) and Hyland " Genre based pedagogies: A social response to process" (Reading packet)
Write a position paper on the readings. Johns, chapter 2 "Genre knowledge and socioliteracies" (Reading Packet)
October 9   Post Process Theory and ESL Writing
Presenter/s_____
Read Matsuda, "Composition Studies and ESL Writing" pp. 773-796 (CT) and Silva, "Differences in ESL and Native-English-Speaker Writing" in (Reading packet)
October 16 ESL Writers
Assignment: Read Hartwell, "Grammar, grammars and the teaching of grammar" pp.
Ilona Leki "ESL preference for error correction" in (Reading packet)
Prepare position paper on the need for grammar and error correction.
October 23 Grammar and error correction.
Class teaching _____
Assignment: Read: Hyland "Responding to student writing" in (Reading packet)
Sperling "Revealing the Teacher as Reader: A framework for studying response**."**WebCT
October 30   Teacher and peer feedback to writing
Class teaching_____
November 6 Conferencing, tutors, and writing centers
Class teaching _____
Assignment: Assignment: Read: "Assessing writing" from: Ken Hyland (reading packet)
November 13. How to assess writing
Class Teaching _____
Assignment: Read: Anson, "Distant Voices. Teaching Writing in a Culture of Technology" pp 797-818 (CT) and Latterell "Re-experiencing the ordinary: Mapping technology's impact on everyday life" (Reading Packet) **Write a position paper**

November 21 Writing and Technology
Class Teaching _____
Assignment: Read Malea Powell, "Learning (Teaching) to Teach (Learn)" in (Reading Packet)
November 27 Theory and Practice Putting it all together.

Appendix C Perceptions of Writing 1

Please complete the following questionnaire by answering the questions or making a mark(X).

1. Where were you born? _____

2. Where were you raised? _____

3. What is your first language? _____

4. What is your second language? _____

5. What is your level of education? _____

6. Have you taken any writing courses? No _____ Yes _____

7. Do you teach? No _____ Yes _____ If yes, please answer 7a through 7d.

    a. How many years of experience do you have? _____

    b. What grade(s) do you teach? _____

    c. What subjects do you teach? Mark all that apply.

    Math _____   English _____   Science _____

    History _____   Spanish _____   Other _____ (specify) _____

    d. Do you teach writing? (either as a course in general or as part of an English course) No

        _____ Yes _____ If you answered yes, explain briefly how you teach writing.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. What are your expectations from this writing course English 6030? What exactly do you expect to learn in the class?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. When you correct your student's writing or assignments, what do you focus on the most? The least? Place a number in front of each to show the order of importance you give each one when correcting your student's assignments.

(Range: 1 = most important to 5 = least important)

_____ Organization (ex: sentences, paragraphs, order of events)

_____ Grammar (ex: verb tenses, prepositions, articles, nouns, etc.)

_____ Style (ex. Narratives, descriptions, compare and contrast, etc.)

_____ Mechanics (ex: punctuation)

_____ Content (ex: topic sentence, supporting details, following the topic, etc.)

10. If you had to teach a writing course today what would be your focus? Briefly explain what you think are the most important elements/ sequences in your writing course.

Appendix D Perceptions of Writing 2

Please complete the following questionnaire by answering the questions.

1. Do you believe your expectations from this writing course English 6030 have been fulfilled? Explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Now that you have completed the English 6030 course, what do you consider to be the most important aspect of writing? The least? Place a number in front of each to show the order of importance you give each one.

(Range: 1 = most important to 5 = least important)

_____ Organization (ex: sentences, paragraphs, order of events)

_____ Grammar (ex: verb tenses, prepositions, articles, nouns, etc.)

_____ Style (ex. Narratives, descriptions, compare and contrast, etc.)

_____ Mechanics (ex: punctuation)

_____ Content (ex: topic sentence, supporting details, following the topic, etc.)

3. What aspects of the English 6030 course have helped you to improve as a writing teacher (or future writing teacher)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Applying what you have learned in class, if you had to teach a writing course today what would be your focus? Briefly explain what you think are the most important elements/ sequences in your writing course.

Appendix E Sample Student Essay

Motorcycle

Almost everybody agree that motocycle are beautiful and exciting, but many people think that are very dangerous and is a waste of money have one.

The people who think that motorcycle are useless machings are wrong. Motorcycle have convenience over others vehicles like cars. If you evaluate this machine ocupe less parking space than other motor power transportation like the kind of four wheels, this quality save space and time (you don't have to look for a big parking for your car)

If we talk about speed motorcycle are better than other vehicle with iers because the motor produce suficient power for it weight and for this reason also gave more gas than others vehicle
If you are thinking that are expensive probably you are thinking in a good looking and beautifull sport bike like a Honda CBR, Kawasaki Kija, or a Susuky Katora but in this particular case you are paying for performance- but yo can find a motorcycle for your needs, they are diferent kind of bike like scotter, motocross, Harley Davisnos, and much more.

And remember before to buy a motocycle be sure to learn how can used it is easy if you know to own a bicycle and you know how to use a manual transmission (if you you don't you need one automatic transmission) If you one to have a good time, you have to be careful don't try do think that you normaly you don't make in a car. (drive carefuly)

Appendix F Questions for First Interview with Professor

1. What are your expectations for this course?

2. What do you plan to do during the semester to make these students better writers and better writing teachers?

3. What is your philosophy on the teaching of writing?

4. You have been with this group of students for a few weeks now. How do you perceive this group? Do they have a somewhat idea of what the teaching of writing involves?

Appendix G Questions for Second Interview with Professor

1. Do you believe your expectations for this course have been fulfilled? Elaborate your answer.

2. After having spent a semester with this group of students, how do you perceive them? Have they left this class with an idea of what they should do to teach writing in the future?

Appendix H Interview Questions for Participants

1. How does a student become a better writer?

2. What is your role as a teacher in helping students learn to write?

3. When you are going to write a paper, what is important to you? How do you deal with it? What do you do?

4. As a student, what is your opinion on teachers responding to your written work? How important to you is their feedback? How do you handle the corrections and/or comments the teacher makes on your written work?

5. How would you teach writing, for example, an opinion essay? What steps would you take?

Appendix I Dialogic Log Example

Dialogic Log #10

Grammar is what separates the elite from the commoners who haven't mastered the proper way of structuring a sentence. I personally hate the word simply because I was never good at it. I might be able to construct coherent sentences but I never learned the rules and much less apply them as instructed in a grammar book. I think grammar is a lot more natural than what people think. We have been exposed to language from a young age and our brain is like a sponge absorbing every little detail that surrounds us. Language is probably one of the first things we learn and we automatically construct sentences from what we've learned. In a way, grammar comes in naturally and it believes that scientific or school grammar makes things worst for us. 3 worst for students, because teachers could easily use it to apply a Banking Approach

The question is, how do should we grade our students and how should we correct their writing? Is error correction really necessary? In some ways it is, there are many L2 students who wants to improve on their foreign language and error correction is a good way to help them improve. But we should also be lenient because they will most likely commit a lot of errors and by correcting them we are practically writing the essay for them. For those who are native speakers; error

Yes, but if we do not point out what they are doing "wrong" they will not know what they need to improve

Furthermore, that's just one aspect of the situation Students might find themselves inhibited

correction may not be as effective. The problem is that they rely more

on their instinctive knowledge of grammar and trying to correct them *I disagree*

and impose rule on them will either frustrate them or they will see no

improvements after error correction.

Even though I don't believe in grammar, I also think that

people expect to be graded on grammar and therefore doing error

correction will still be common in the classroom. *this is a fact, and one of the reasons why grammar cannot be entirely discarded.*

Appendix J Follow-up Interview Questions

1. What specifically will you use in your teaching of writing from this course?

2. How was this course valuable to you?

3. How do you plan to approach correction of student essays in the future? Is this different from before? Why or why not?

4. What aspects of the class helped you to change your views on feedback?

5. Do you believe error correction will help students' accuracy over time?

6. Look at your two corrections of essays. In the first one, you did this. In the second one, you did this. Can you explain why?