

PROPOSAL FOR WRAB III, Paris France, 19-22 February 2014

Submitted: 1 APRIL 2013

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Speaker 1: *"Message in a Bottle: What Writers Can Learn from Expert Readers"*

Speaker 2: *"The Effectiveness of Written vs. Oral Modes in Teacher and Peer Response"*

Speaker 3: *"Responding to Student Writing Across All Four Years: Building Professional Development"*

Word count: 996

Response to Writing and the Development of Expertise: Professional, Pedagogical, and Relational Perspectives

For decades, scholars of writing have argued that response is central to students' learning and development as writers. Voluminous research has analyzed teacher responses—the number, types, style, focus, and pragmatic force of marginal comments, the content of end commentary, the balance of praise and criticism, and the underlying developmental models conveyed through teachers' evaluations and advice (see Anson, 2012, and Straub, 2006 for overviews). But little research has considered teachers' responses as complex interactions that involve various relational entailments, that can vary significantly by mode of delivery, and that develop along a trajectory from novice to expert.

The goal of this symposium is to extend our understanding of the nature of response through research studies focusing on the development of expertise from professional, interactional, pedagogical, modality-based, and peer-to-peer perspectives. All three presentations offer insights about the interaction between reading and writing. A focus on reading through responses of experts and teachers as well as students can help student writers see how their work is understood and why these readers respond as they do. We will end by engaging in discussion of how to help students read their own work more effectively and write with a deeper understanding of the responses their writing elicits.

Presenter 1: "Message in a Bottle: What Writers Can Learn from Expert Readers"

Expert readers can reveal much useful information for writers if they are asked about how they read certain kinds of texts and how they respond to them. Internationally-based studies of expert readers (Hillesund, 2010; Lamont, 2009; Ware & Monkman, 2008) as well as U.S.-based studies (Horning, 2012; Sword, 2012) show that writers, readers, and editors of journal articles and research proposals have specific expectations about the nature of academic writing. These expectations are captured by a theory of expert meta-reading involving three types of awareness: meta-textual, meta-contextual, and meta-linguistic. In addition, experts use four skills (analysis, evaluation, synthesis, and application) that allow them to read and respond to academic texts efficiently.

This presenter will report on a study of experts reading articles for a major peer-reviewed journal. Six members of the editorial board participated in a two-part process approved by an institutional IRB. First, each participant completed an online survey, provided demographic and background information, and responded to a series of Likert-scale items which asked about their reading approach and process. Next, participants completed a 30-minute semi-structured, recorded telephone interview with the principal investigator, expanding on their reading habits and strategies. The interview comments were coded for

the awarenesses and skills mentioned above. Approximately 600 comments are included in the analysis.

Results show clear support for the meta-level awarenesses and skills proposed in the theory: experts understand meaning in texts by working before, after, around, and within those skills in specific ways. The results offer insights to help us understand what expert readers know and do as they build interaction with the writer, and can inform those teaching novice readers to read more expertly. Meta-reading as an interactional mode of response provides student writers one way to interact professionally and academically with readers to develop textual awarenesses and response skills in their major field of study.

Presenter 2: “The Effectiveness of Written vs. Oral Modes in Teacher and Peer Response”

Little scholarship exists, beyond studies of face-to-face conferences, on response to writing provided in an oral medium. Sociocultural views of literacy and orality suggest various entailments for each mode, especially in the ways that oral communication about writing reflects both individual perspectives on literacy development and socially determined educational practices through which roles and identities are expressed and negotiated. As new technologies develop that allow instructors to provide digitally captured voice responses to their students’ writing, research is needed to more fully understand the effects of these response media on students’ learning and writing development (Anson, 2011; Sipple, 2007; Sommers, 2002).

The first stage of the research to be presented investigated the difference between conventional written comments and screen capture response (SCR). SCR allows teachers to record everything happening on their screen as they scroll through, highlight, and comment orally on students’ writing. This study, undertaken in college-level writing and content-area courses taught face-to-face or online, employed mixed methodologies, including surveys, focus groups, text analysis, interviews with teachers, and videotaped SCR-based interviews.

The results show statistically higher levels of self-reported learning from SCR than conventional written response; statistically more positive student construction of teachers’ intentions and identities in SCR than in conventional written response; and qualitatively different teacher focus in the two modes. Results will also be shared from a new phase of the research investigating the effectiveness of SCR for peer-to-peer response, employing qualitative coding of response relative to improvements made to drafts in progress.

Presenter 3: “Responding to Student Writing Across All Four Years: Building Professional Development”

This presenter reports findings from a case study that explored how undergraduates learned one recurring genre across four years of a professional baccalaureate degree program (Chaudoir, 2012). The study empirically examined the social processes of ongoing feedback and response before the assignment was turned for a grade, and asked what kinds of response facilitates professional development as students progress through their program.

Informed by the theoretical frameworks of Bazerman (2004), the study involved 31 students, 6 instructors, and 1 Writing In the Disciplines (WID) specialist. Institutional ethnography methods (DeVault & McCoy, 2002; Neuendorf, 2002) were used to guide classroom observations, textual analysis of writing instructions, and assignment-focused discussion about one recurring writing assignment called the scholarly essay. Content analysis was used to code transcripts. As categorical themes emerged, parent-sibling codes were established.

Findings showed that response needs differed between lower years and upper years. The presentation will include upper-lower year response comparisons, common concerns, and participants' suggestions to reform response as an iterative process that communicates assumptions and expectations before the assignment is due and constructs dialogue that builds trust between the marker and the student. Findings support the need for student-teacher relational interaction throughout the whole period of training.