WHEN TO BEST APPLY PEER RESPONSE ACTIVITIES TO THE WRITING

PROCESS IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Ryan James Costello

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Stephen L. Fox, Ph.D., Chair

_____

Susanmarie Harrington, Ph.D.

Master's Thesis
Committee

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Scott R. Weeden, Ph.D.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In my 6 years of teaching high school English, I've encountered numerous challenges like any other teacher. How do I make 16-year-old students excited about the poetically-just gore of Dante's *Inferno*? When reading Shakespeare, how can I get my students to use the 90% of words they do know to help understand the 10% they don't? How can I make vocabulary more than just a temporary binge and purge of SAT buzz words? My fellow department members have no shortage of struggles as well. However, one aspect of the high school English classroom poses a consistent and confounding problem in my short career. We all know it will help their writing. We all know it will create more student ownership of their writing. We all know it will help students forget the teacher as the audience of every writing piece. But we don't know when or how do to it. Peer response is the mysterious beast of the high school classroom.

I've attempted to incorporate peer response activities into my honors sophomore classes in the past, with mixed results. One year, the students would fill out peer response sheets, and never say a word. Another year, I would spend most of class time corralling their discussions back to the essay at hand instead of the latest hallway gossip. Some peer response pairs become a one-way street, with one student spending time and energy on helping their peer, only to get back a minimal effort from their partner. I've had students plead to complete peer response on every essay assignment, and others plead to never have to point out a classmate's error. Some students hold the grade above all else, and don't want anyone other than the teacher telling them what to correct. Others are not willing to lend a helping hand.

To be honest, the inconsistent results have scared me from this classroom strategy. Because I wasn't sure whether to have them use verbal or written response, whether to have them work in groups or pairs, or how to deal with unwilling partners, I stopped any attempt at peer response, thereby increasing my workload. The burden to improve the essays fell on me. I was perceived as the only source of what constituted good writing, even though there was a wealth of knowledge and experience in the room full of bright 16-year-olds. But I still hoped to incorporate their writing strengths in a way that would improve their writing.

My three sections of World Literature, the honors sophomore class, seemed like an ideal group of students to help me explore various approaches to peer response. They would likely be willing to not only participate, but offer thoughtful and honest feedback from their perspective, and the process, no matter what form it took, was likely to improve their writing portfolio grade, a definite incentive for students working toward acceptance into AP Language next year. Their comparison research essay assignment was nearing, which would present an assignment that even the most accomplished sophomores would need help with. It seemed to be a win-win for myself and the students. Before developing a plan for classroom research, I had to determine what was already known about peer response in the high school classroom, and what contribution my study might make to the discussion.

Peer response is a term with wide and varied application, including one-on-one, small group, and whole group response given at various stages of the writing process for many different purposes. The still frequently-found term "peer editing" further confuses the discussion among teachers, as it suggests an end-stage process devoted solely to

"local" or editing concerns. Based on the scholarly and professional literature and my own practice, peer response includes any form of student-produced feedback to other students' writing. Regardless of the form, any classroom exercise in which students, rather than teachers, become the primary source of feedback regarding how to more effectively convey their ideas and arguments through writing qualifies as peer response.

Most students have limited exposure to peer response activities because in many high school English classrooms, writing is presented as a solitary exercise. Students are given instructions on independently developing a thesis, an outline, one or two drafts, and a final copy. Class time is spent handing out format guidelines, sample outlines, and grading rubrics. While overwhelmed teachers conduct speed-conferences with individual students, the rest of the class is asked to sit in silence and work in their secluded writing vacuum. This creates an unhealthy writing environment that stifles what Karen Spear argues should be "a lively communal activity" (3). Instead of a classroom environment that facilitates active minds, thought becomes stagnant because individual writing and revision doesn't encourage interaction.

There's also no sense of community when a student's audience is the lone teacher with the red pen. Collaboration proponent Nancie Atwell notes *A Place Called School*, in which John Goodlad finds that "students chose as favorites the classes in which they routinely collaborate with other students and the teacher, have some say about the product, and take an active stance" (68). It seems that if students are motivated by communal activities, and writing is an exercise in communicating with others, then incorporating collaboration into the writing process provides an ideal opportunity to make the high school English class relevant and meaningful. Peer response also provides

a chance for students to share in the struggle of what even professional writers will attest to: the challenge of writing. Davidson and Worsham note that because writing in the classroom can be such a lonely task, the insight and support of others can often improve writing and cognitive ability, as well as social skills (220). Once again, the social aspect of writing cannot be ignored, making it clear that a more social writing process will improve the end product.

Literature Review

Many have argued the value of peer work as a component of the writing process. Whether the feedback is verbal or written, expressed in one-on-one or group situations, peer response is theorized or shown to help students make their writing better. In a study comparing "peer editing," a one-on-one exercise of written feedback, to revision workshops, which involve multiple partners discussing a piece of writing, Michael Graner finds that both strategies lead to improved writing (42). Atwell, who works with middle school students, notes the ability of peer response to "let writers and readers assume control [and] responsibility for the hard work of considering, shaping, and sharing their ideas" rather than students artificially creating something to say because of an assigned topic or form (71). Peter Elbow, Pat Belanoff, Kenneth Bruffee, and Thom Hawkins "have convincingly argued the value of peer interaction during the writing process" (George 320). In his experience with high school students, Dennis Barron asserts that peer groups often produce more tolerant, focused students, willing to meet outside of class to discuss not ultimatums, as seen in a teacher's mechanical requirements, but alternatives from a non-authority figure (Barron 30). Through peer response, students begin to see writing as a means of conveying an idea. Revision

becomes an exercise in more effectively expressing their point, not just getting a better grade.

However, while this can create a less intimidating environment, doubt in a student's ability or desire to recognize good writing can also lead to hesitation on the part of both student and teachers. Teachers often fear that without their persistent grading, students will be content to tread water (Lamberg 66). Michael Graner, in his article presenting the revision workshop as a high school classroom tool, notes some possible limitations of peer response. Students that lack both the skill and critical eye to be effective collaborators meet in a classroom environment in which the teacher has surrendered classroom control (Graner 40). Teachers, because of hesitation to trust their students' self-motivation, create peer response activities that attempt to navigate the balance between student-driven revision and teacher-evaluated assignments.

The literature reveals that though teachers and scholars acknowledge peer response as a useful tool in the writing toolbox, many teachers still struggle with knowing how and when to use it. Three clear areas of struggle shine through the literature: (1) preparation, (2) purpose, and (3) production. First, teachers are searching for ways to prepare their students for a classroom environment that they've rarely been exposed to, as secondary schools are especially teacher-based. It's both unrealistic and ultimately counterproductive to require students to complete a task for which they have little preparation time. Preparation is followed by purpose, because like any assignment, if students aren't aware of the purpose, there is little hope of cooperation, let alone success. Because peer response drastically changes the traditional teacher-student roles, the purpose of the change, and these new roles, must be clarified. Finally, the process'

product must be of high value to the writer, rather than a cosmetic exercise in proofreading. No matter the structure, peer response must create an improved final product, lest the time and effort be proven wasteful. Exploring how to prepare students for peer response, clarify the purpose of peer response, and create a useful product from peer response, I hope to find enough information that might allow me to identify the ideal format and placement of peer response in my class' writing process.

Preparing Students For Peer Response

No teacher expects a student to write a quality research paper without having instruction on how to do so. Just as a student is unlikely to correctly write a Works Cited page if they've never learned the skills necessary to do so, asking students to respond to each other's work without preparation is equally unattainable. Both Barron and VanDeWeghe find that incorporating peer response into the high school classroom often fails because teachers assume that their students have the background knowledge needed to participate in the activity (Barron 30, VanDeWeghe 97). If students cannot be expected to write well without instruction, expecting them to discuss effective writing without instruction is unrealistic (Spear 7). This unfair expectation asks students to immediately execute a function to which they've likely had little exposure.

Going from an environment where the teacher is the ultimate judge of proper writing to a more student-centered system is a drastic change. Although the teacher has the final say in the form of a grade, peer response does allow students more freedom to follow or ignore suggestions. If a teacher is going to implement such a drastic change in classroom structure, they must accompany that change with instruction on how to use that new structure (Spear 8). In his struggle to make peer response more productive for his

high schoolers, Rick VanDeWeghe notes that in his initial attempts, he made a mistake by making a "presumed correlation between a student's ability to write and to critique" (95). He thought that since his students knew how to write an essay, they also knew how to critique an essay. But he, like other teachers who have not provided adequate preparation, created an environment where students blindly guess at what they should be doing. Most teachers have found that when students were left to their own instincts, they would either compliment without support, correct small mechanical errors, or insult without recommendation. Graner finds that in his classroom, peer response activities can "degenerate into recitations of mutual compliments, unsupported by content" because students want to avoid commenting negatively on a peer's writing (40). Students call each other's essays "great" but don't explain what was so great about them. They describe an essay's organization as "perfect" but are then unable to explain the structure used.

When students have little preparation, Davidson and Worsham note their tendency to avoid inflammatory comments, instead providing blanket statements of approval (216). These compliments are rarely accompanied by any concrete example of what made the writing so good. These vague accolades often do more harm than good. In her research, Karen Spear observes that the students' desire to compliment writing, regardless of quality, directly conflicts with the need to improve writing. The immediate need for harmony trumps the more distant need for improvement (39). And even those students who identify weaknesses in a peer's writing more often criticize than critique. Both positive and negative comments lack support because students were unaware that support was needed.

Clearly, preparation greatly improves the chance that peer response will be effective. When students are shown how to respond productively, they do so more often. Most successful experiences with peer response include some form of modeling responses that offer more than just cosmetic fixes. Nancie Atwell notes the importance of modeling measured, respectful, and focused discussion of writing at all times (75). If students fear that their writing is going to be shot down, mocked, or invalidated, they are unlikely to buy into the process. Because her students observe Atwell's style of critique as the model for how they should approach conferences, she avoids sarcasm, insults, and vague compliments. Another teacher who has found success with peer response consistently avoids yes/no questions in all facets of the class because they rarely lead to new ideas or content (Schaffer 83). VanDeWeghe's study shows more thoughtful responses from students with previous peer response experience as they "devoted 54%...of their comments to strategies of readers and writers [while] 60% of comments by [less-experienced students] fell into the sentence and word categories" (97). Students with less preparation in peer response commented on mechanical errors. And while asking students to fix mechanical errors provides a more concrete task, it can potentially derail the purpose of the exercise. Ronald Barron warns against what he calls the "error hunt" because it does little to help students understand their strengths and weaknesses regarding organization and style (24). The key to preparation seems to be, as VanDeWeghe observes, students "experience[ing] quality ways of responding firsthand, not just [being] told about them," (95). If students are shown how to offer comments regarding writing strategies rather than sentence edits, they will provide the same. But many students don't feel qualified to comment in the first place.

The research also shows that negative comments are often avoided because students doubt that they can be of help. When his students expressed doubt that they could assess quality writing, Thomas McKendy asked his students to assess college application essays. Afterward, he compared his students' evaluation with the application board. The students were surprised to see that their judgments were in line with those they saw as the traditional sources of expertise (McKendy 90). This exercise legitimized the students' ability to be helpful, and served as preparation to respond to each other's work with confidence. Sometimes, it is the teacher that doubts the potential for students to help each other. Walter Lamberg's investigation of the perceived gap between the effectiveness of peer and teacher response researched studies that evaluated the improvement of high school student writing, some who had peer response, and others that were given teacher feedback. While his research found studies with varied results, he notes that two studies showed "no statistically significant differences between groups' receiving peer and teacher-provided feedback" as well as two studies that actually showed more improvement from writers that received peer feedback (Lamberg 64). This suggests that both student and teacher anxiety in the ability of students to help each other is incorrect. But even with proper attention given to preparation, peer response can prove ineffective if students are in the dark when it comes to the reason they're doing it.

<center>Clarifying the Purpose of Peer Response for Students</center>

Just as teachers cannot expect students to perform a task with an unknown structure, they cannot expect students to perform a task with an unknown purpose. Students are more likely to properly execute skills when they understand the reason for the rule. Peer response is complicated, because it requires a drastic restructuring of

traditional student and teacher roles. Students are being asked to evaluate how effectively a text conveys an idea. And it's critical that students and teachers recognize their new role in that process. Davidson and Worsham define the teacher's role as someone who monitors progress, asks and answers questions, encourages students who are struggling, and models appropriate peer response (217). Teachers remain active in the process, but their voice of authority is quieted in favor of a more balanced teacher-student relationship. Diana George's work with peer groups reveals that the most successful groups use their teacher as a resource of clarification rather than a primary source of judgment (23). Productive peer response groups feel no need to wait for or rely on an instructor.

On the other hand, an inattentive teacher is likely to prevent peer response from bearing fruit. Less successful peer response groups in George's study halt discussion if the teacher is not directly involved. Dominant students overtook the group with their personal judgments, halting the group's ability to be constructively critical (321). A teacher that remains active in peer response surrenders some facets of their usual role. Regretfully, if the teacher does not execute the duties of identifying problems and keeping discussion goal-oriented, those duties may not occur. Students have to step into that role, assuring focused and constructive peer response. Thomas Newkirk warns that if the change in roles is made without acknowledgement that teachers and students read student work differently, the process won't work. Asking students to write for their peers can falsely assume "that the teacher is fully aware of the criteria that the peer audience applies to students' writing" (Newkirk 309). However, research suggests that a teacher's criteria and expectations regarding student writing is far different from the view students

take of each other's work. Most students approach writing from a more personal angle. Newkirk's study of the differences between instructor and peer evaluations notes that students routinely praise essays they can "relate to," a justification that teachers rarely used (304-5). Newkirk's study determined that students are only partially able to embrace their new, more critical, purpose in responding to a peer's work. They are largely unable to evaluate how an essay meets or fails an assignment's guidelines because they were still approaching the text as a private reader (308). This personal approach also leads students further from the purpose of peer response. Students tend to "affirm the writer-as-person rather than the text-as-embodiment-of-ideas" (Spear 34). And so, whether the student is validating or rejecting the writer as a person, they still fail to address the text's strengths and weaknesses.

Another study finds that while students view peer response as an activity of "lexical substitution and mechanical clean-up," teachers more often see the process as an exercise of discovering meaning (Spear 39). This disconnect in purpose often leads to a significant gap between what the teacher and student see as the reason for peer response. Some teachers rely on mechanics-based peer response because it provides a direct task for the students and a tangible product for the teacher. Unfortunately, editing sheets often function as a placebo, convincing the students they are helping significantly when, as Sarah Warshauer Freedman discovered in her case study of two 9th grade classrooms of peer response groups, "rarely do [dittoed response sheets] discuss real writing problems or find solutions" (26). While most teachers envision peer response as a way to help clarify thoughts and ideas, some teachers and many students see it as a chance to polish

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mechanics. Peer response activities that focus on mechanics further cloud its true purpose.

Most research suggests that when students adopt a focus of improving content rather than mechanics, peer response is more successful. Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff encourage a system that asks the writer to control the type and form of response. Mara Holt combines this with Kenneth Bruffee's approach of basing peer response in dialogue as a way to avoid mechanical checklists and quick, shallow comments that rarely lead to significant improvements in writing (Holt 384-6). Another teacher finds that student-created questions give students a purpose, compelling them to consider content more seriously. One student in Jane Schaffer's 10th grade class credits peer response as the catalyst for critically thinking about her own writing. "Otherwise, I would just stare at my essay and think 'I hate that but I don't know what to do with it'" (Schaffer 89). Peer response pushes students to think critically about how ideas are presented. But if the product of the process is a listing of mechanical errors, little to no critical thinking will occur.

<p style="text-align:center">Creating an Effective Product from Peer Response</p>

The literature shows that while most teachers have relied on the latter stages of writing to attempt peer response, the earlier stages of writing might provide an opportunity for more relevant improvement in the product. In *A Community of Writers*, Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff argue that because revision is necessary throughout the writing process, peer response would also be useful from start to finish. They compare the construction of writing to the construction of the human body. First, they promote using others to "resee, rethink, or change the bones" of a piece of writing (154). The

"bones" of a piece of writing addresses what is being said. It's important that students hear alternatives regarding their point of view, argument, and structure early into the process. Spear agrees, defining the role of a peer responder as one of "mutual generation and exploration of ideas" (58). The early stages of idea formation produce more conversation and critical thinking from both the writer and reader. When Graner compares peer editing, which focuses on one student proofreading another's work through written feedback on editing sheets, to revision workshop, which includes small groups discussing each other's work together, he notes that writing improvement comes not because of the editing sessions, but from "the practice of critical evaluation" (42). Graner argues that input from other people is critical in the early stages of writing, because it allows a writer to look at his or her topic or argument from other perspectives. As the writing process progresses, it becomes increasingly less flexible. For example, there's no alternative perspective on subject/verb agreement, and so discussion becomes less helpful. And so, when peer response appears later in the writing process, more often than not the activities become exercises in labeling elements of writing, rather than a discussion of strategies for improvement.

Some teachers avoid discussion-based peer response because it's more difficult to gauge whether or not discussion is "on task." Jane Schaffer offers a method that not only encourages readers and writers to rethink the bones, but create a product that teachers can traditionally assess. After modeling what A-quality response looks like, Schaffer recommends that teachers require students to write at least 10 valid questions that will help their partner's paper (84). The process is then repeated with another responder, so that writers can identify and address trends in the responses. If multiple responders have

trouble with a writer's organizational strategies, the writer will begin to *think* of alternative methods.

While bones create the foundation of the human body, muscles give the body its power and flexibility. Elbow and Belanoff promote the use of peer response to rework and reshape the muscles of writing (154). While the "bones" address *what* the writer is saying, the "muscles" focus on *how* they are saying it. Writers often use tone, style, and diction to "flex" the support and analysis of their argument, but these can also be difficult concepts for students to incorporate into their writing. The muscles of writing can also be problematic for students, because the type of support and depth of analysis required varies, depending on the purpose of the assignment. And while, again, error identification doesn't always promote discussion, it can potentially prompt the writer to reshape the work in some way. In Mara Holt's fusing of the Elbow/Belanoff writer-based and Bruffee's dialogue-based peer response methods, her high school students have multiple opportunities to compare what the writer implies through their style and voice to the writer's ultimate goal (387). While Holt differs in that she promotes written feedback instead of verbal, the process' product is the same: writers are given new ways to flex their "muscles."

Of course, human bones and muscles must be contained. The skin offers a more attractive package for the body, and Elbow and Belanoff equate copyediting and proofreading with changing the skin of writing (154). But what good does healthy skin do for someone with weak bones? If a person suffers from muscle spasms, a glowing complexion will do little to ease their pain. In the same way, asking students to help edit their work during the final stages of writing often asks them to help conceal a fatal flaw.

Each peer response sample from the appendix, and most from the literature, focused overwhelmingly on changing the skin. But perfect mechanics cannot save an illogical argument. A poorly crafted idea sequence will overshadow proper sentences structure. And still, many teachers insist on placing peer response at the end of the writing process because it gives both students and teachers a sense that the process is truly productive. But as Graner, Moore Howard, Newkirk, Spear, VanDeWeghe, and Warshauer Freedman point out, peer response late in the game doesn't produce significant gains in improving the core argument of a piece of writing.

Curious to see if my current students were accustomed to peer response so late in the writing process, I asked my colleagues to send me their peer response activities. In those activities, attempts were made to identify the bones of a work. Rarely, though, did the activities ask students to help each other resee, rethink, or change those bones. Some activities ask peer responders to identify the conflict, rising action, and climax of a short story, but do not require any form of discussion. Others ask peer responders to identify the thesis statement and structure of formal writing but stop short of asking responders to offer alternative strategies. These reflect an exercise in labeling, not rethinking. One colleague's peer editing activity for student poetry asks students to identify active verbs, concrete nouns, and limited use of adjectives. Others ask students to identify uses of figurative language, symbolism, and other literary devices in creative writing. Very few of the peer response rubrics from colleagues address "muscles." Of those who did, peer response activities often asked students to look for bones, muscles, and skin in one activity, further clouding the focus, and rarely allowing sufficient time. My previous attempts at peer response activities rarely involved discussion between the students. More

often, the pressure was on the peer responder to correctly label elements of writing. I created peer response activities that contradicted the purpose I wanted my students to have as they worked with each other's writing. I wanted them to sharpen their ideas, but created exercises that focused on mechanics.

CHAPTER TWO

Statement of Gap: Where to Put Peer Response

Peer response, no matter the form, improves student writing to some degree. Though some methods may be less helpful than others, I have not found a study that suggests that peer response hurts the level of writing. But the literature shows that because students aren't adequately prepared, teachers don't clearly explain purpose, and the product of the process is so varied, effectively incorporating peer response remains difficult. Both the literature and samples collected from colleagues show that most teachers conduct peer response in the later stages of the writing process, with a focus on mechanics. Much of the research claims that this creates only the appearance of a product. Because focusing on mechanics leads peers to look only for tangible, superficial weaknesses in writing, it does little to prompt the writer to think about how they can better convey their ideas. And so, as I began moving to the next stage of my study, this key question remained: *how can peer response be best implemented to help student writing?* And because much of the research suggests that waiting until the end of the process limits the potential for meaningful revision, I wondered, *how might introducing peer response earlier in the writing process improve student writing?* It was with these two questions in mind that I developed my study of researching peer response in the high school classroom.

Classroom Research

As indicated above, I chose to incorporate peer response into three honors 10th grade World Literature classes. World Literature is a year-long course, so at the time of my study, I had taught all 88 students for three quarters of the school year. In the 4th

quarter, I assigned them a research project. Because the literature studied in class is approached through a cultural lens, the students were asked to choose two cultures as their research topics. While I required that they compare or contrast three different elements of the two cultures, thereby determining the basic structure of their essays, they ultimately chose the cultures and cultural elements to research and write about. I encouraged the students to choose topics that would personally interest them, so that research might become a personal endeavor more than a simple classroom assignment.

For example, if a student comes from a Spanish family, they might choose to contrast two Spanish-speaking cultures. One student, Olivia, is personally interested in cooking, so she chose cuisine as one of the cultural elements, or keys. Through research, students were to analyze not only how, but why similarities or differences between cultures existed. Olivia, who settled on the cultures of Spain and Argentina, had to not only establish that Spanish and Argentinean cuisine have differences, but also use her research to show why those differences exist. Ultimately, students chose two cultures to compare or contrast, using three keys. Olivia settled on food, holidays, and etiquette.

<div align="center">Assignment Checkpoints and Deadlines</div>

From start to finish, students had one month to complete the assignment. The first two weeks were spent researching potential cultures and keys, reviewing acceptable research methods and sources, and developing a thesis statement and outline that included the two cultures and three keys they'd settled on. During this time, I checked student thesis statements, outlines, and potential research, all on a completion-based points system. If the assignment was in on time, they earned the points. Using Davidson and Worsham's notion of monitoring, I established my role as a monitor of progress

rather than the sole voice of authority. I asked questions that might lead students to clarification, for example, or steer them to a more useful database. The basic structure of the checkpoints, along with my role as teacher, was as follows:

- Checkpoint #1: Thesis – Students used the thesis formula I provided to create a clear and concise thesis statement that would clearly indicate the two cultures, three keys, and claim being made (Appendix A). Because they had only been researching for a few days, students were not locked into the thesis statements they turned in. Most students ended up changing them in some way after this date. For example, while Olivia originally listed cuisine, marital customs, and dialect as her three keys, only cuisine made it to the final draft.

- Checkpoint #2: Final Research – On this date, students had to bring in hard copies of any research listed (Appendix B). They had to show through highlighting or note-taking that the materials had been read and specific pieces of information were being considered. I only allow two web-only sources in the final essay, so students had to consider that and seek print and online database sources for the majority of their information. In the first week of the assignment, two full class days were dedicated to evaluation techniques for web-only reliability, and navigation of online databases and the Marion County Public Library catalog. Most students had used these research tools in their freshmen English class, so it was a review of sorts. After this date, students were limited to these approved sources, and could not add a new source. This was put in place so that students would not wait until the last minute to research. For example, as Olivia struggled to find enough information on differences in Spanish and Argentinean dialect, I

suggested she also research a few alternative keys, so that if she had to change keys after research was checked, she would have approved research to use.

- Checkpoint #3: Outline – Students again followed a fairly structured outline format that I provided to begin organizing their research into sections (Appendix C). I often use the term "safe bet" to note the typical structure of the assignment, though I do encourage students to try a different approach if their topic requires it. For this assignment, the "safe bet" was to have two paragraphs per key, separating the information about each culture into separate paragraphs. The outline required students to essentially create the topic sentence for each body paragraph, and suggest the strategies they were considering for the introduction and conclusion. For example, on Olivia's outline, she noted that in her introduction, she would "first establish the common language between the cultures before moving to the thesis that will establish their differences." I took a glance at their outlines, to make sure they established a clear pattern of argument, and noted any potential pitfalls I had seen.

- Checkpoint #4: 1st Final Copy – After being given a handout explaining the "safe bet" paragraph, or recommended depth of argument, and all other assignment guidelines, expectations, and formatting requirements, students turned in a 1st final copy (Appendix D). I skimmed the 1st final copy and assessed their content only, as mechanics would be addressed during later drafts. This step varied from the previous ones, because it was not a completion-based grade. Rather, a 1st final copy rubric was used to calculate a grade out of 25 points. Olivia earned a 19/25 on her 1st final copy, losing points because her conclusion was redundant and she

didn't follow her source information with an explanation of relevance, as the "safe bet" paragraph had recommended.

- Checkpoint #5: 2nd Final Copy – After being given a 2nd final copy study tips sheet, recommending exercises to help identify areas for improvement, and requiring that students consider my comments on their 1st final copy, students wrote a 2nd final copy (Appendix E). I would check to see that they completed all tasks from the tip sheet. After looking at Olivia's 2nd final copy, her conclusion remained untouched, so she lost points for not attempting to improve upon an aspect of her writing I had pointed out on her 1st final copy rubric.

- Checkpoint #6: Final Draft – Finally, students were given submission guidelines, the grading rubric, and three days to make changes and submit a final draft. Their grade, out of 100 points, would factor into their semester writing portfolio grade, which functions similar to a semester exam test grade. As seen in Appendix F, students were given a specific rubric, so that they might avoid some of the harder-hitting penalties (more on that later).

- The Role of Peer Response in the Checkpoint Process – Each of the three classes would complete a peer response activity at different points in the writing process. Second period completed their activity between turning in their thesis statement and their research. Seventh period completed theirs after I returned their first final copy, and eighth period completed theirs just before turning in their final draft.

    Part of their peer response checkpoint included an introductory survey given to the students before the assignment was introduced (Appendix G). All three classes answered the same set of questions. The survey covered three topics:

(1) the students' attitudes toward their own strengths and weaknesses as writers, (2) the students' attitudes toward previous peer response experiences, and (3) the students' attitudes toward their ability to respond to a peer's work.

In an effort to understand how peer response can be helpful throughout the writing process, not just at the end, each of the three class periods experienced a peer response activity at a different stage. I modeled the placement of each class' peer response exercise off Elbow and Belanoff's body-muscles-skin analogy, placing second period's peer response during idea formation, when they were choosing *what* to say, seventh period's during the shaping process as they decided *how* to say it, and eighth period's during the polishing of mechanics. In all three classes, significant time was dedicated to preparing students for peer response at that particular stage in the writing process. This was done by giving the students a pre-activity handout to briefly explain the Elbow/Belanoff theory on peer response as well as assess their current level of comfort regarding that stage of the writing process during which they'd be experiencing peer response. The classes were aware that they would each complete only one of the three peer response activities, but had access to all of three exercises via the class website. This step was taken when, early on, some students in my second period class expressed concerns that only having the opportunity of peer response early in the writing process would put them at a disadvantage, further confirming their initial view that peer response was best done at the end of the writing process.

An exit survey covering the same three topics was administered after students turned in their final draft (Appendix K). These two surveys would

hopefully provide evidence of any change in student opinion of peer response's

effectiveness in improving their writing.

CHAPTER THREE

Results of Introductory Survey

<u>Student Attitudes Toward Their Own Academic Writing Strengths/Weaknesses</u>

Through the introductory survey, I asked students to assess their level of confidence and attention to 7 different writing skills. The thesis and organization of their assignment best matched Elbow and Belanoff's view of a writing's "bones." Support and analysis reflected the "muscles," and punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure served as the assignment's "skin." Because I've had these students all year and provided them with essay grading rubrics, these terms were familiar to them, and they knew that the first four dealt with content while the final three focused on mechanics.

Most students felt most confident in the more mechanical aspects of their writing. While numbers neared 4 on a 5-point scale in regards to punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure, students expressed the least amount of confidence in the support and analysis of their writing. To borrow from Elbow and Belanoff, the students seemed confident in their "skin," but doubtful of their "muscles." As seen in Figure 1, their level of attention to each aspect of their writing, while less sporadic, followed a similar pattern of strong skin and weak muscles, as seen below. The students' previous experience focused on mechanics, and so they spent most of their attention on those aspects of their writing. In turn, close attention resulted in greater confidence.

Figure 1

Intro Survey (all classes)- Level of Confidence, Attention
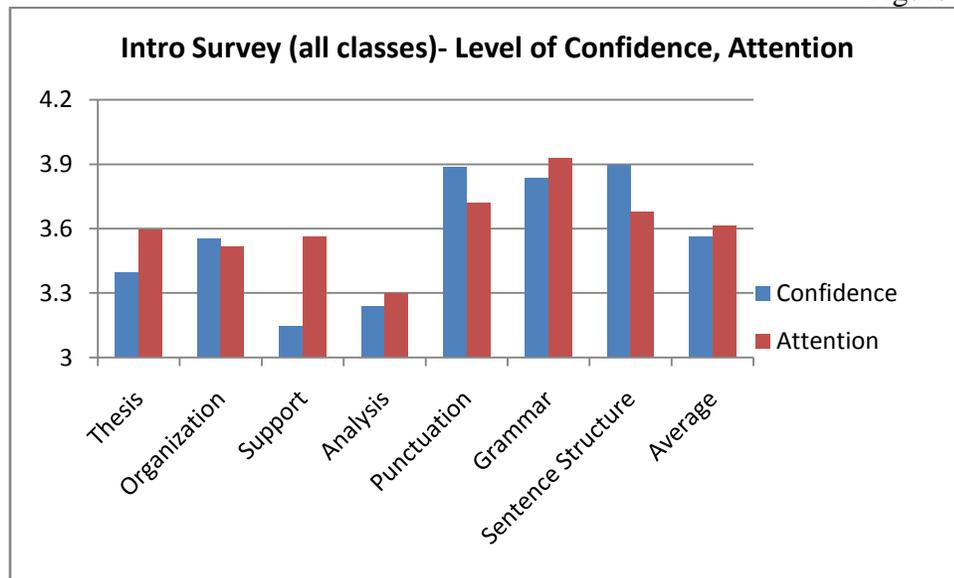
When asked who they typically turn to when seeking improvement on previous writing assignments, the students chose the current teacher who gave the assignment and a classmate, suggesting that most students felt peers could give helpful responses, and confirming Lamberg's research that suggests a small gap between peer and teacher-provided feedback. Students who identified "other" as being especially helpful usually identified their "other" as an older sibling, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Intro Survey (all classes) - Level of Helpfulness
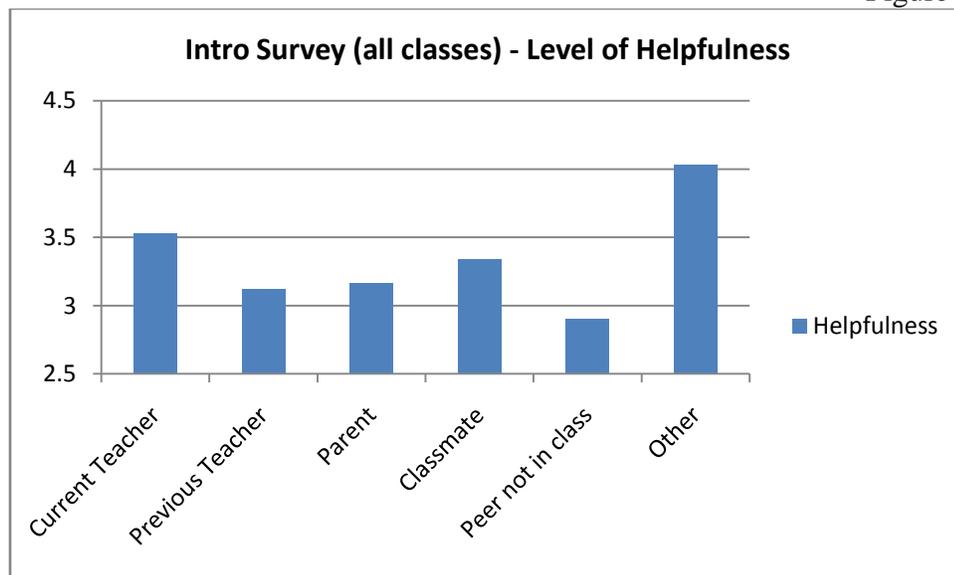
<u>Student Attitudes Toward Their Previous Peer Response Experiences</u>

When asked the short-response question "What is the purpose of peer response?" I did not receive the myriad responses I was anticipating. The large majority of students defined it in one of two ways: (1) it helps the writer find mistakes they hadn't caught themselves or (2) it provides the writer with a different perspective. Almost all responses noted that the primarily goal in the process was to help the writer, a sign that students acknowledged the potential benefits of peer response, no matter the form. In an effort to gauge their previous experience, I asked them to note the different formats of peer response they'd participated in. Most had done one-on-one peer response activities as opposed to groups of 3 or 4. And while most had done both verbal and written feedback styles, they preferred a mixture of both. When asked what aspects of their writing they felt a peer would be most helpful in improving, they once again noted the "skin" as the area of strength.

Figure 3

Intro Survey - Helpfulness of Peer
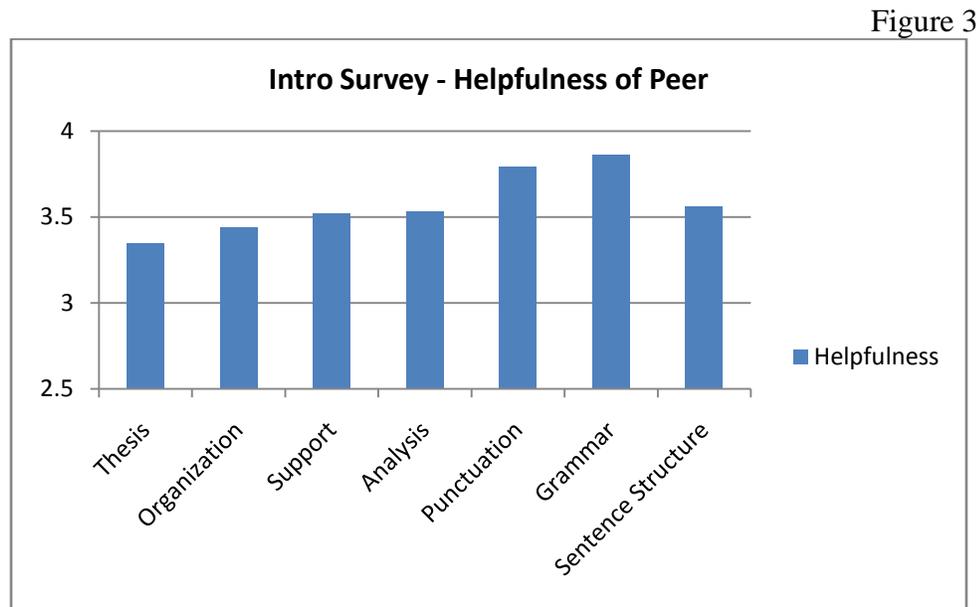
<u>Student Attitudes Toward Their Own Ability to Respond to Peer's Work</u>

When asked if they felt qualified and prepared to respond to a peer's work, most said yes, noting their previous experience with the process or the comfort in working on the same assignment. Those who felt unqualified typically noted their own lack of confidence in their writing skills. And again, Figure 4 shows that students felt most confident in their ability to help a peer improve their writing's "skin." Support and analysis, the "muscles," scored lowest, along with thesis.

Figure 4
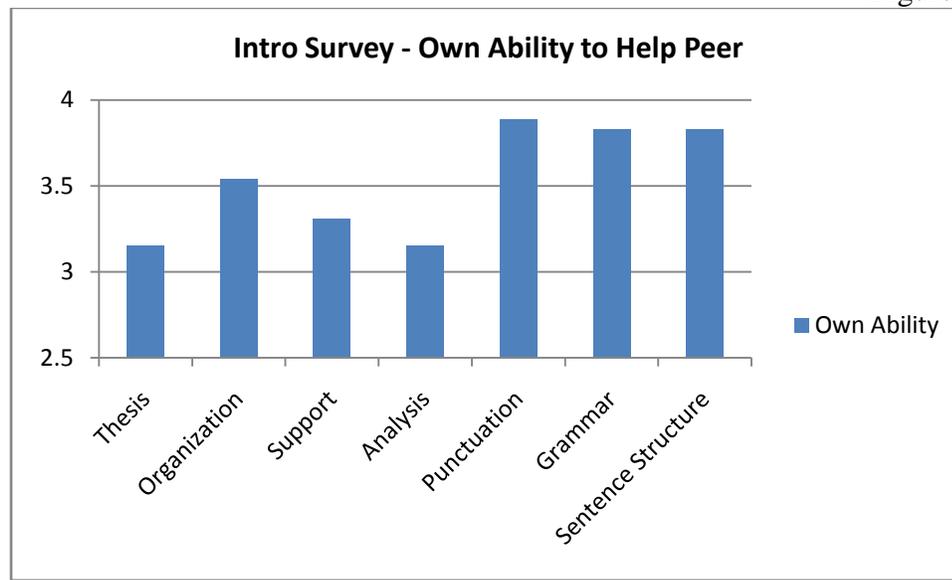
Results of Pre-Activity Sheets

My second period class participated in their "bones" peer response activity a few days before their final research was due. Preparing the students for peer response took one class period, and the peer response activity took place the following day. Preparation included a 20-minute lecture on Elbow's theory that peer response, though typically implemented in the later stages of writing, could benefit writers throughout. We discussed the human body analogy, one which the students found easily relatable. A handout equated the different aspects of writing with the corresponding purpose in their

writing and body part in the analogy (Appendix H). For example, with second period, we discussed how the thesis and organizational choices they had made during research had created the foundation or "bones" of the writing they would complete over the next two weeks. We noted how just as strong muscles and flawless skin will do little to help someone with weak bones, an essay without a strong foundation is just as sure to struggle.

Second period was then told the purpose of their peer response activity. In such an early stage of the writing process, as no writing other than a thesis statement had been done at this point, their goals were to ask questions that might prompt the writer to consider alternative cultures or cultural elements provide an outside perspective on the work already done, and offer any suggestions for further research as they headed into their final weekend of research time. As with all three classes, I followed the advice of Schaffer, and avoided yes/no questions that would not lead to new ideas. We also modeled appropriate responses by putting a sample thesis statement on the board. I created a sample thesis statement (as seen in Appendix A), and asked the students to ask questions, offer alternative or narrowed cultures and keys, and suggest further research avenues to explore. They first suggested that I clarify if I'd be exploring the modern cultures of Ireland and South Africa, or a specific time period. A few students also felt that government was not focused enough, and that I should narrow it to economic or trade policy.

The night before, students were asked to complete a pre-activity sheet for their peer responder to use the next day (Appendix H). Students wrote their thesis statement as it stood that day, ranked their confidence in that thesis on a scale of 1-5, and provided

some of their successes and struggles regarding key selection and researching. The average ranking of confidence was 3, but with only one student ranking their thesis confidence level at 5, and six students ranking theirs at 2, it was clear that most didn't feel their thesis was set in stone.

Seventh period responded to each other's work after the 1st final copy was complete, three weeks into the assignment. Again, we spent significant class time discussing the human anatomy analogy. This time, we focused on how strong bones require strong muscle in order to exert their strength. The support and analysis of an essay reflected its ability to "flex." I then presented the purpose of seventh period peer response activity, noting that their aim was to ask questions that might lead the writer to consider new support and analysis, provide an outside perspective, and offer any suggestions that might strengthen the writer's argument (Appendix I). Once again, we used class time to model appropriate responses by taking a look at an excerpt of a sample 1st final copy. The sample I provided was again based on my sample Irish/South African topic. The students suggested moving the first key, cuisine, to the 3rd position, because they felt it made the strongest argument. Others felt the keys lacked transitional language between the keys, creating a fragmented argument.

Students then completed a pre-activity sheet in which they assessed their own level of confidence in their current keys' argument (Appendix I). Not surprisingly, the seventh period students expressed a slight increase in confidence in their keys (3.3) when compared to second period. But again, only one student marked a 5, and three marked 2. Still, more students were comfortable with where their argument was heading into peer response.

Eighth period handled a "skin"-based peer response activity between the 2nd final copy and final draft. Again, we focused on the human body, noting the importance of first impressions. Just as skin is the first thing one sees when looking at a person, simple mechanical mistakes can sometimes overshadow an otherwise strong essay. The purpose of eighth period's peer response activity was to offer suggestions on how to improve the assignment formatting, grammar, and word choice of the 2nd final copy (Appendix J). The pre-activity sheet asked students to assess their level of confidence in those three categories, and the results mirrored what was seen in the introductory survey. Students showed a high level of confidence in their grammar with a 3.9 average. The pre-activity sheets confirmed the results of the introductory survey. Whether removed from or participating in a specific writing assignment, students expressed confidence in the later stages of writing and doubt in the early and middle stages (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Pre-Activity Sheet - Confidence in Checkpoint
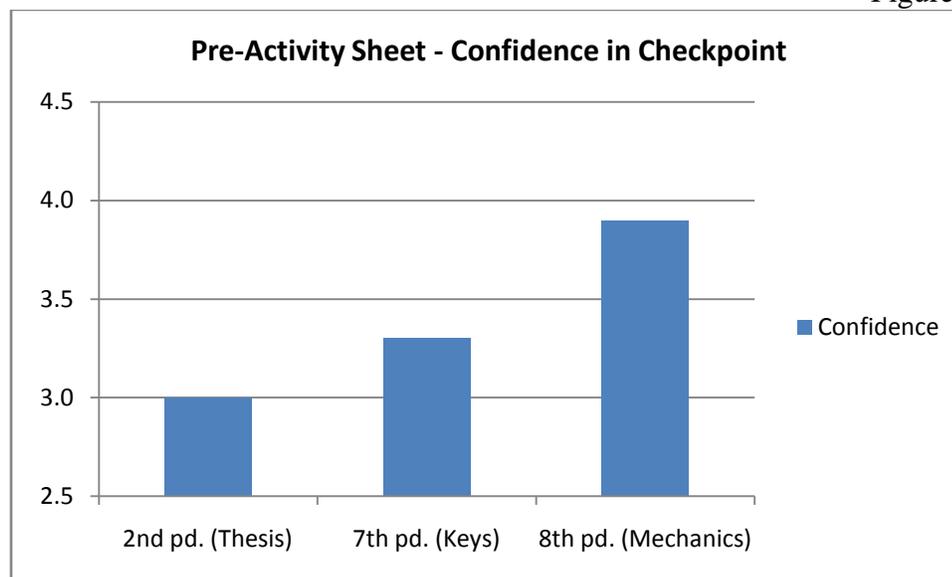
Results of Exit Survey

As the literature review found, the three areas of peer response that typically tripped up teachers included lack of preparation, unclear purpose, and an ineffective product of the process. After grading the students' research papers, completing an exit survey, and analyzing both, my findings applied to the same three areas. While such an expansive assignment makes it difficult to pinpoint the impact of peer response as opposed to other steps in the writing process, there are some indications that putting peer response in the "muscles" phase of the writing process will best improve student writing. While my 88 students had a variety of experiences during the month-long assignment, I was able to draw three clear conclusions that shed a bit more light on how to best implement peer response to improve student writing.

<div align="center">Regarding the Preparation of Peer Response</div>

- *While a wealth of previous experience led to most students feeling qualified to respond to a peer's work before the peer response activity, students completing peer response earlier in the writing process felt less qualified afterward.*

The majority of research on peer response found that the busy schedule of a typical English classroom did not leave much room for peer response preparation activities. Luckily, the introductory survey showed that all of my students had participated in some form of peer response in their previous English classes. In fact, when asked of their previous experience with peer response, all 88 students checked at least one format. Figure 6 shows that most identified working in one-on-one formats, and nearly one-third had participated in peer discussion groups, defined as "groups of three or more" on the survey.

Figure 6

Intro Survey (all classes) - Previous Experience (diff. formats)
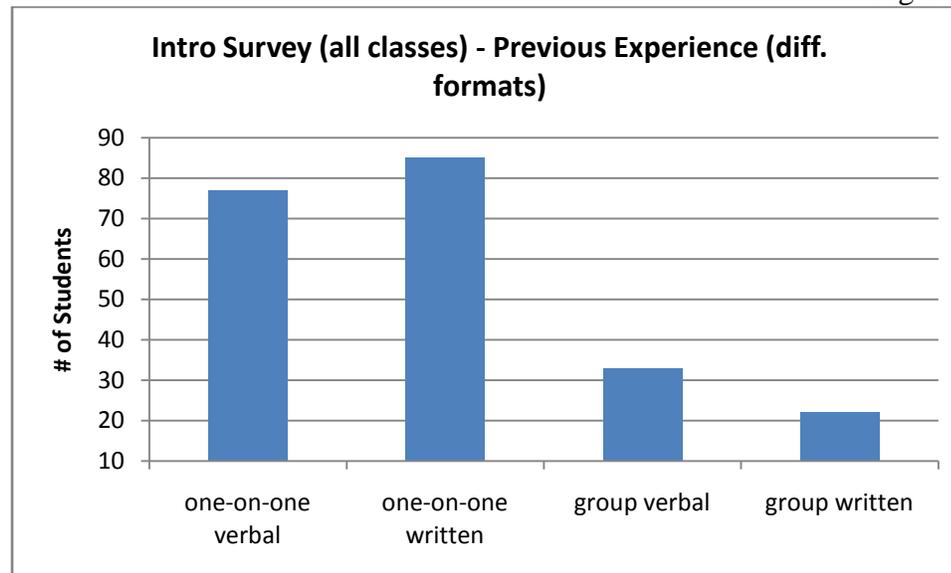
Because of this wealth of experience across the board, the only class time used to prepare focused on the Elbow/Belanoff theory and modeling the peer response exercise each class period would be completing. Their previous experience also led most students to feel confident that they were qualified to respond to a peer's work. Students were asked this question on both the introductory and exit survey. Their answers provided the first sign that placing the peer response activity in different phases of the writing process did have an impact on, at least, their perception of the exercise. Figures 7-9 show the students' responses from both the introductory and exit survey regarding whether or not they feel qualified to respond to a peer's work. Seventh period and eighth period showed an increase in students saying they felt qualified, suggesting that the peer response activity completed between the two surveys improved their confidence in helping their peers. On the other hand, second period saw an increase in students saying they didn't feel confident in their ability to help, and those who said they did feel qualified did not increase according to the exit survey.

Figure 7

2nd pd: Do Students Feel Qualified to Respond to Peer's Work?

Figure 8

7th pd: Do Students Feel Qualified to Respond to Peer's Work?

Figure 9

8th pd: Do Students Feel Qualified to Respond to Peer's Work?
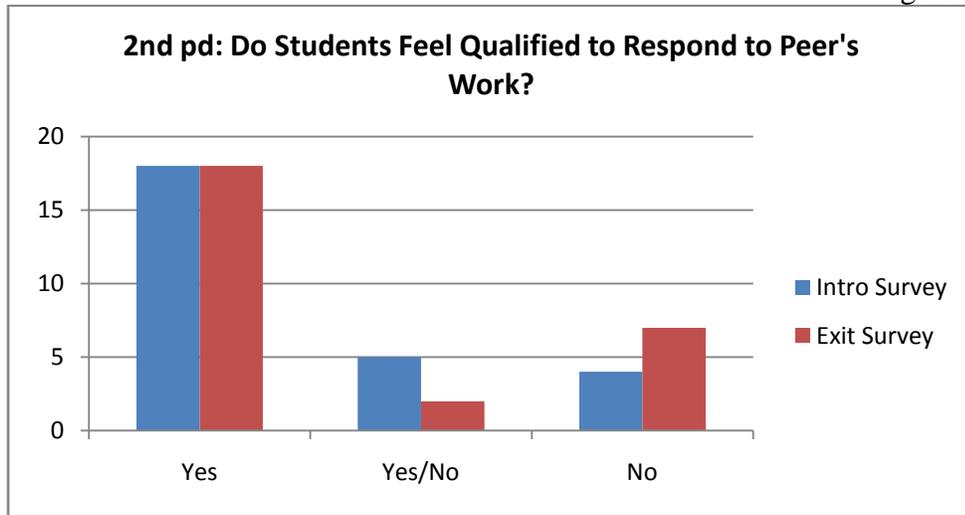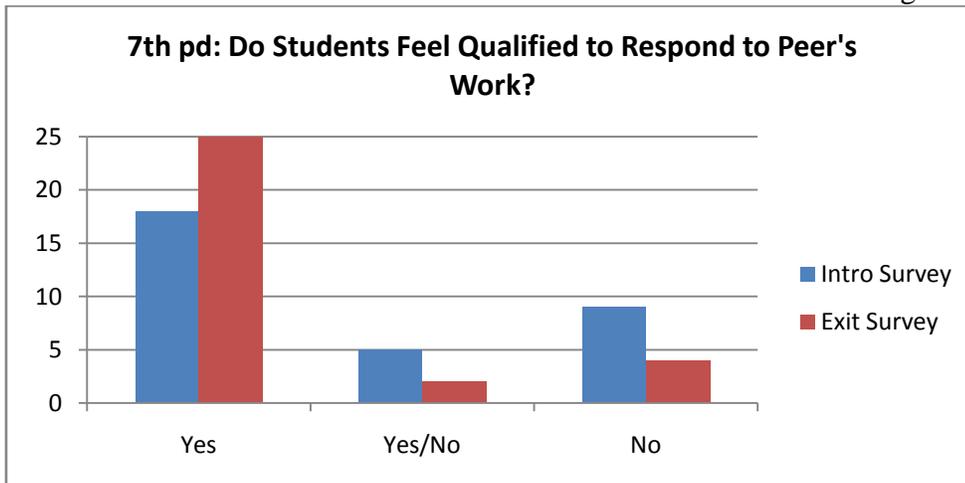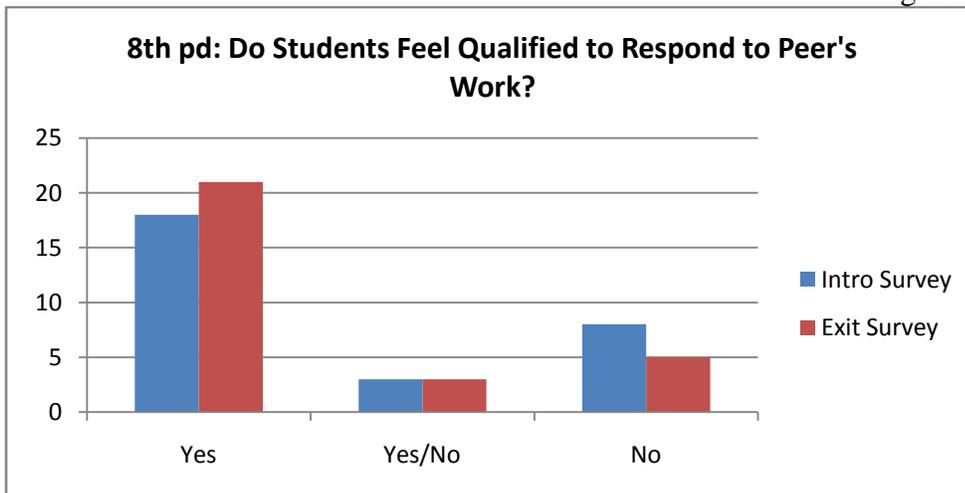
Of the second period students that felt unqualified to respond to a peer's work, most noted they didn't know much about their peer's topic, and therefore "didn't know how to help them improve their thesis statement," according to second period student Jacob's exit survey. Another student, Ella, echoed Jacob's sentiment, stating that "because they only had a one-sentence thesis statement, [she] didn't know of any suggestions to give. There wasn't much to build off of." While the large majority of the students still felt qualified, the shift in second period was the first sign that conducting peer response too early might not produce improved writing. Their comments definitively showed that they felt unprepared to respond at such an early stage in the writing process.

On the other hand, when comparing the introductory and exit surveys of seventh and eighth period, those students attributed their increase in feeling qualified to respond to having the same assignment as the peer, and therefore understanding what suggestions to make. This differs from the Newkirk study that found students responding to peer writing in a personal way. In fact, knowledge of the assignment guidelines, and their own attempts to adhere to them, made the students more conscious of the teacher's expectations of the assignment. "I wanted to make sure they didn't get a low grade because I missed a mistake of theirs," commented Jack from eighth period. Many students, nearly one third of all 88 students also agreed with Ethan, from seventh period, who noted in his exit survey that "because I saw a gap in my partner's support, I went back to my own paper to make sure I hadn't made the same mistake." This supports Heather Byland's claim that peer response allows a student to "transfer his or her awareness about [an aspect of their writing] from the peer response group to his or her own essay" (57). Thirteen of the 59 students in seventh and eighth period mentioned the

application of something they saw in their peer's writing to their own essay, while only two from second period cited this practice.

When developing the peer response activity sheets (see Appendix H, I, and J), I sought to help students avoid the yes/no responses that, as Spear suggested, often lead to shallow discussion. But in second period's case, the open-ended questions often led the peer responder to ask questions or make suggestions that had little to do with the writer's overall goal. In one peer response pair, Addison noted that her partner, Grace, had suggested looking into sports as a possible key, but that she "didn't have any interest in sports, so that would be boring." At such an early point, many suggestions dealt more closely with what the responder found interesting in the topic than with the intent of the writer. And because students were free to accept or reject their peer's suggestions, if the suggestions were not pertinent to the writer's intent, they went unused. And while that may have solidified the writer's original idea as a solid one, they did not view that confirmation as helpful.

<p style="text-align:center;">Regarding the Purpose of Peer Response</p>

- *Though students felt most confident responding to a peer's mechanics, most both defined and preferred the purpose of peer response activities to be a means of improving content.*

When the students were asked in the introductory survey to define the purpose, they mentioned helping improve the writer's work or at least offering a different perspective (see graph below). But rarely did any students mention a more specific aspect of writing. After the introductory survey, it was clear that my students did not necessarily equate peer response activities with a simple polishing of writing mechanics, as

<p style="text-align:center;">35</p>

Newkirk's study found. However, they didn't necessarily attach peer response to improving a writer's content, either. Spear had noted that the gap between the student view of peer response and the teacher view was a matter of mechanical clean-up versus idea revision.

Figure 10

Intro Survey (all classes) - Purpose of Peer Response
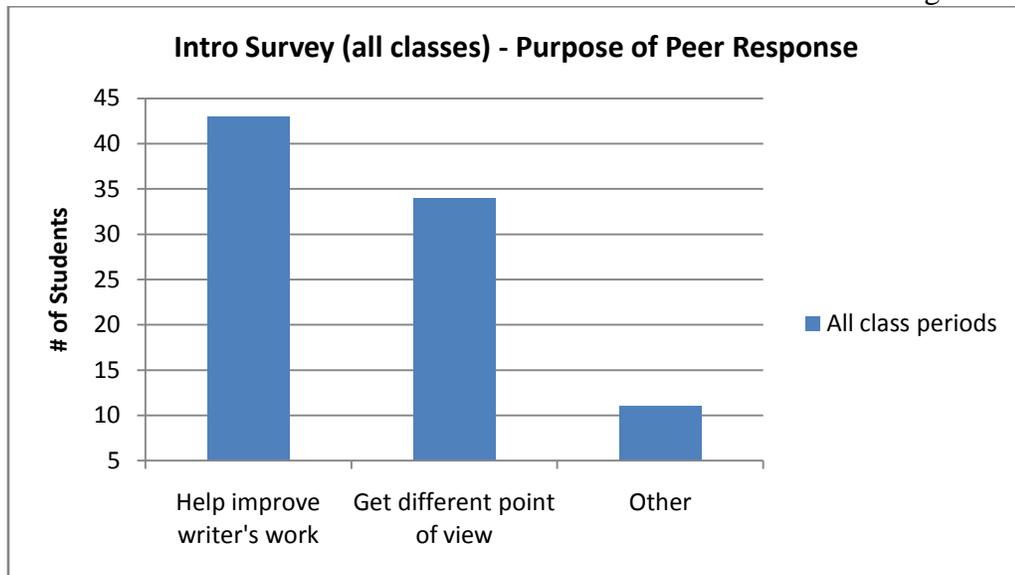
It wasn't until all classes had completed their peer response activity that once again, second period stood out, showing a contradiction of sorts. While most students of all classes expressed confidence in their own and each other's ability to write and revise mechanically-sound essays, most students also would have preferred help during the "muscles" phase of writing, which focused on support and analysis, not mechanics. For example, Figure 11 shows the results of an exit survey question that asked students whether they would have rather completed the peer response activity during a different phase of the writing process.

Figure 11

Exit Survey - At which stage in the writing process would you have preferred to participate in peer response?
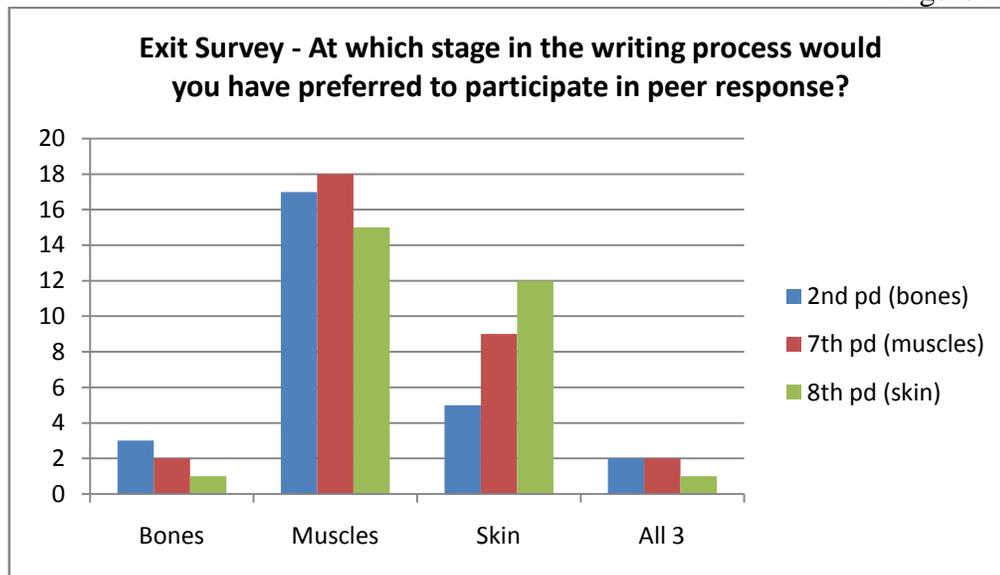
Figure 11 shows that even though the three classes participated in peer response at different stages in the writing process, their preferences, if given the choice, mirrored each other. Most wanted peer response during the support and analysis stages, because, as those who chose "muscles" wrote on their surveys, that was the area in which they felt least confident. Second period was least satisfied with their experience, with only 3 students saying they preferred peer response so early. Peer responders felt there wasn't enough to respond to, and writers felt that their responders gave irrelevant feedback. Seventh period was most satisfied, as over half of them liked helping each other in the middle of the process. Eighth period saw close numbers between students preferring peer response during "muscles" and those enjoying their experience at the "skin" phase. Once again, the negative response from second period was linked to a lack of work done to that point. Students said that "there wasn't enough to work with" and "it was done too early." Most students that identified the "muscles" as their preferred place to conduct peer response noted building support as their weakest skill. The peer response activity sheets confirmed this, as seventh period had the most thorough responses. Second and eighth

period struggled to meet the required number of suggestions. Students wanted the peer response with a purpose of improving their support and analysis, despite their earlier responses claiming they would best help with mechanics.

But this had been clear from the beginning of research, when they revealed their low confidence in support and analysis. And while a comparison of the introductory and exit surveys revealed a significant increase in confidence in all aspects of their writing, the placement of the peer response activity did not reveal any varied results between classes. Seventh period did not see an inflated increase in confidence regarding their "muscles" just as eighth period did not see a more pronounced confidence in their "skin." Figure 12 compares an average of all students' confidence both before and after the research assignment.

Figure 12

All classes: Confidence in Own Writing
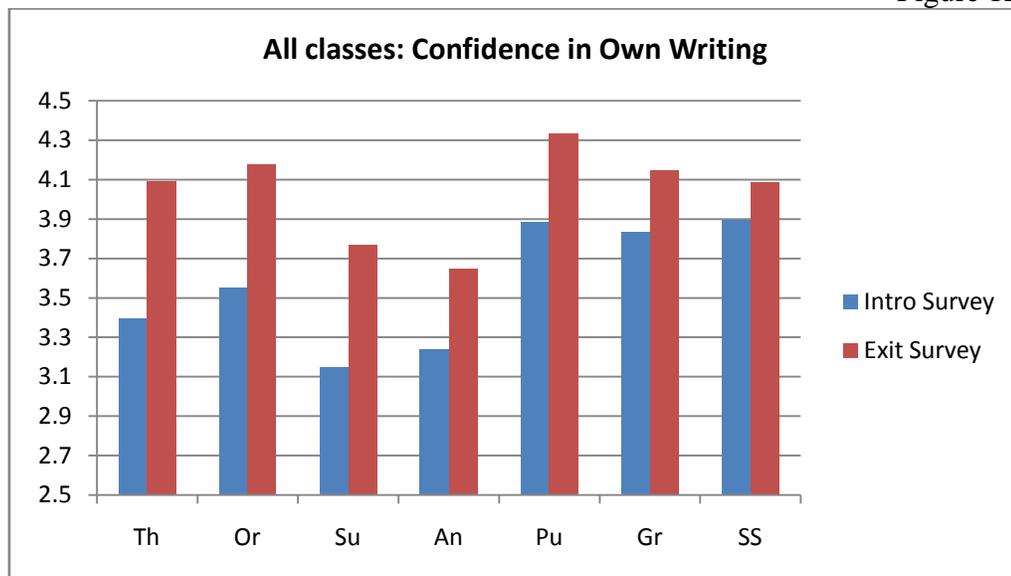
This implies that it was not the peer response activity that increased their confidence. More likely, it was spending a month of focus and energy on one piece of writing that caused the surge.

Regarding the Product of Peer Response

- *Regardless of when peer response was conducted, all classes saw the same increase in final draft grade when compared to other assignments from class.*

As the confidence in their own writing showed little influence from the peer response activity, so too did the final grade of the research reveal little difference between the classes. In fact, all classes saw an average increase of only 1% on their final draft grade when compared to their previous expository essay grade from 2 months prior, in which no peer response activity was done. However, several factors may have contributed to what seems like an insignificant bump.

Because this assignment focused on responsible researching and the formatting guidelines needed to give sources credit, any mistakes that in some way failed to properly cite sources were heavily penalized. For example, listing a source on the works cited page but failing to actually cite the work in the essay merited a 4-point decrease in grade. Of the 88 students, 14 made this mistake. Another heavy-hitting penalty, and a policy of the school's entire English department, is an automatic 5-point subtraction for using 1st person, affecting 10 students. The sheer length of the essays, 5-7 pages for most students, was far beyond anything else they'd written this year. This assignment had more opportunities to make mistakes, and so the grade earned was much more difficult to achieve when compared to the other assignments from the year. After adjusting the grades to ignore the penalties that were only applicable to this specific assignment, and ignoring the penalties not addressed in the peer response activities, the increase in final draft showed a slight separation between each class period. Second period's inched up to

1.5%, seventh period averaged a 3%, or half-letter grade, increase, and eighth period enjoyed a 2% bump.
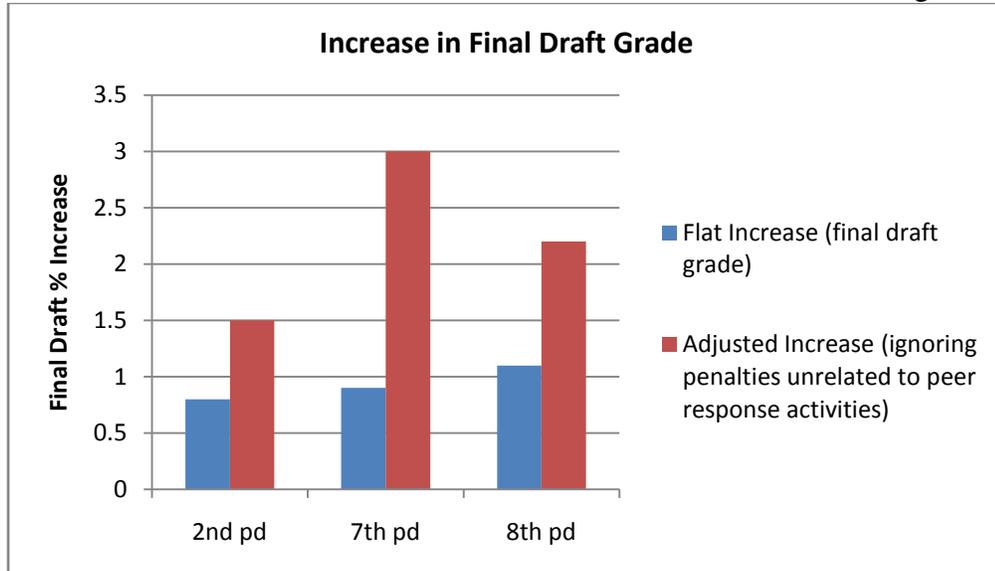
Seventh period improved their grade twice as much as second period, fitting the earlier findings that they were most happy with their peer response activity placement, as it focused on the area they perceived as their biggest writing weakness. Grades increased more when peer response was complete in the middle or late stages of the writing process. Regardless of class period, most students whose grades rose significantly made their gains in their support and analysis. Joseph, a student from seventh period, earned a 13-point increase between the previous expository essay and this research paper, in large part because of an increased depth in analysis of source information. On his exit survey, Joseph credited his peer response group with "pointing out where [he] had forgotten to connect [his] sources with [his] own words." While Joseph had no trouble discussing how all of his information fit together, he had not written it out until his peers voiced their confusion. Also from seventh period, Brianna mentioned on her exit survey that her peer response group helped to identify paragraphs that only provided common knowledge

from her sources. A closer look at Brianna's final draft grade, which jumped nine points, confirmed that stronger support, which her peers suggested, was the primary factor in her improvement.

Conclusion

- *How can peer response be best implemented to help student writing? And how might introducing peer response earlier in the writing process improve student writing?*

My classroom research confirmed what the literature suggested, that any form of peer response will positively influence the quality of student writing. But the student feedback and final draft grades also revealed that when and how peer response is implemented can limit or enhance the amount of improvement. For example, conducting peer response during the "bones" phase of writing came too early, when writers still had only a vague idea of topic, leaving peer responders with little to help form. In turn, the writers felt the peer response experience did little to help their final product. In addition, the expository nature of the writing assignment may have offered little room for students to offer alternative topics. Because the "bones" stage focuses on *what* to say, it proved difficult for peers to discount a basic thesis statement that had yet to attempt *how* to say something. Perhaps an argumentative essay would present more opportunity for early revisions. Peer response during the "muscles" phase produced the largest increase in final grade, and had the largest number of students satisfied with their experience. The "skin" peer response activity contributed to the second highest raise in grade and student satisfaction. In all three classes, the perception of the students regarding the benefit of peer response mirrored their average grade increases, seen in Figure 14. It's important to

note that their final grade did not influence their level of satisfaction, as they answered this question on the exit survey, before receiving their final grade.

Figure 14

Correlation Between Final Draft Increase and Student Satisfaction
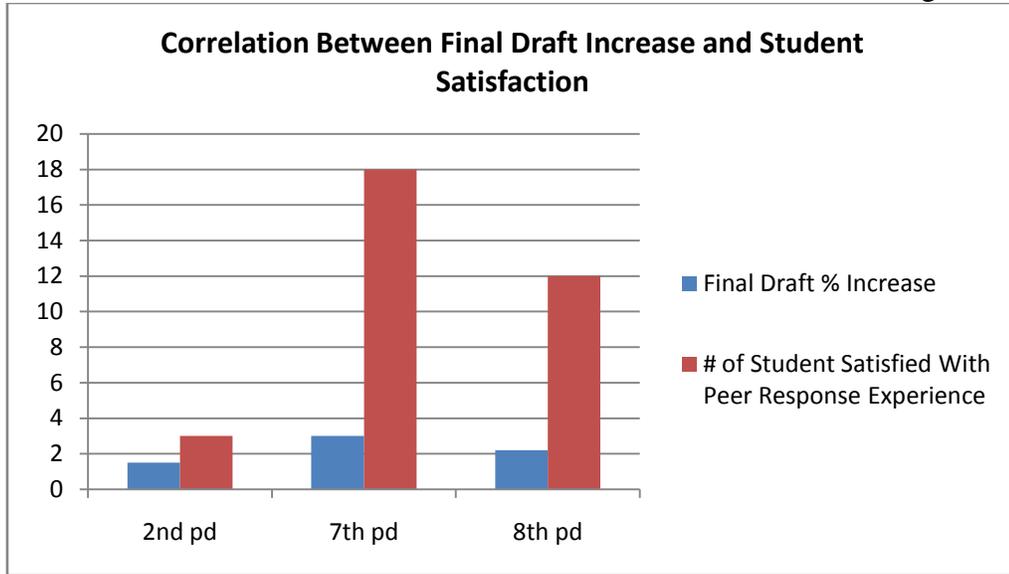
Limited class time, resources, and sanity require teachers to search for the most efficient strategies, no matter the goal. In the case of peer response, my research has shown that if there isn't time for multiple uses of peer response, and only one opportunity can be provided for students, they would be best served completing peer response as they attempt to construct and strengthen their support and analysis. To conduct peer response earlier leaves the students unsure of their purpose and how they can help. When purpose is clouded or lost, so too is the value of the exercise. In addition, peer response in the latter stages proves unnecessary, as it focuses on the skills in which students already excel. The student surveys were integral in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and perhaps teachers might consider student input to identify where peer response can be most helpful. But no matter the classroom or type of essay, most high school students can follow rules of mechanics if they put in the time and effort. But many are trying to form original ideas and arguments for the first time, no longer writing simple book reports or

autobiographies. Peer response can be a valuable tool in exposing high school students to

the challenges of developing and analyzing strong and effective support.

Costello
World Literature III

Research Essay

Checkpoint #1: Thesis Statement (due T 4/14)

(This is merely an example of how to create your thesis statement. It is the "safe bet." Many of you will want to (and I encourage you) to me more creative with your thesis statement structure.

Thesis Formula

Two cultures being compared
+
The claim/point being proven
+
3 keys/aspects of cultures being compared or contrasted
=
Thesis statement!

Thesis Formula Example

The Irish and South African cultures
+
are similar in regards to
+
cuisine, government, and music.
=

The Irish and South African cultures are similar in regards to their cuisine, government, and music.

Your Thesis Statement

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Costello
World Literature III

Checkpoint #2: Research (due M 4/20)

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING IS TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE
ARRIVAL TO CLASS. YOU WILL NOT HAVE TIME TO ORGANIZE
YOUR SOURCES.

1. All sources must be in class in hard copy
   a. Actual print sources, Xerox copies of print sources, print-outs of database articles, web-only information, CDs, DVDs, mp3s, etc.
2. The information you're considering for use should be marked or noted in some way
   a. Book pages post-it noted or flagged
   b. Xerox copies and print-outs highlighted, underlined, etc.
3. Organize your sources into a pile (something that is easy to carry).
4. Then number the sources, so that whatever is on top of the pile is #1.
5. Finally, list the sources on the following sheet, in the order that they are stacked.
   a. Please note that this sheet does NOT require all of the information you will eventually need for the works cited page.
      i. I would recommend using easybib.com if you want to know all the information you will need (we'll use that later on anyway).

Remember, after Monday, April 20th, you may delete
sources from this list, but you MAY NOT ADD ANY!

Source #1

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

(circle one)   (a) print source in print   (b) print source online   (c) web-only source

(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

URL address _____

Source #2

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

(circle one)   (a) print source in print   (b) print source online   (c) web-only source

(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

URL address _____

Source #3

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

(circle one)   (a) print source in print   (b) print source online   (c) web-only source

(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

URL address _____

Source #4

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

(circle one)   (a) print source in print   (b) print source online   (c) web-only source

(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

URL address _____

Sample B cont.

Source #5

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

(circle one)   (a) print source in print   (b) print source online   (c) web-only source

(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

URL address _____

Source #6

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

(circle one)   (a) print source in print   (b) print source online   (c) web-only source

(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

URL address _____

Source #7

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

(circle one)   (a) print source in print   (b) print source online   (c) web-only source

(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

URL address _____

Source #8

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

(circle one)   (a) print source in print   (b) print source online   (c) web-only source

(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

URL address _____

Source #9

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

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(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

                      URL address _____

Source #10

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

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(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

                      URL address _____

Source #11

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

(circle one) (a) print source in print   (b) print source online   (c) web-only source

(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

                      URL address _____

Source #12

Book/Article Title _____

Author Name _____

(circle one) (a) print source in print   (b) print source online   (c) web-only source

(fill out if they apply)   Database name _____

                      URL address _____

Costello
World Literature III

4.20.09

Name: _____

Checkpoint #3: Outline (due W 4/22)

Complete Thesis Statement:

_____
_____
_____

Introduction

¶I._____
_____
_____

Key #1

¶II._____
_____

¶III._____
_____

Key #2

¶IV._____
_____

¶V._____
_____

Key #3

¶VI._____
_____

¶VII._____
_____

Conclusion

¶VIII._____
_____
_____

Costello   **4.23.09**
World Literature III
Research Essay: Turning in 1st Final Copy (due M 4/27)

What is due no later than the beginning of my class on Monday, April 27th:

You must turn in the folder for this assignment, with the following materials included:

Step #1
- o Place all research printouts, informational handouts, etc. from this project in the left-hand side of the folder (anything that is not a checkpoint)

Step #2
- o Place the following materials, organized so that <u>the most recent is on top</u>, in the right-hand side of the folder
  - o Thesis statement checkpoint
  - o Research list of sources checkpoint
  - o Outline checkpoint
  - o 1stFinal Copy

Step #3
- o Give to Mr. Costello when asked.

What is due BEFORE 11:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 26th:

You must turn in an electronic copy of what you gave Mr. Costello via www.turnitin.com

Step #1
- o Make sure you paper is saved using the following file title format:
- o Your last name – Research Essay 1st FC.doc
  - o Ex.
    - ▪ Alfery – Research 1st FC.doc

Step #2
- o Go to www.turnitin.com and log in
  - o Forget your password? Check with Costello <u>before</u> the weekend!
- o Submit your paper to the assignment entitled Research 1st Final Copy
- o Please submit by uploading the file *(unless you wrote your essay on a program other than Microsoft Word)*
  - o *If you wrote your essay on a program other than Microsoft Word, please use the copy and paste method of submission.*
- o Remember: **your works cited page must be part of your document file**, so that it can be submitted along with the rest of the paper.

- o Remember: When uploading your file, **please use the creative title you have created** for your essay **when filling in the title box on the screen**.

Please read through them carefully as you format your paper.
- ❑ **Margins** set at 1 inch
  - ❑ Select *Page Layout* tab →Click on *Margins* icon → select *Normal* layout
- ❑ Include **right-justified header** of Last Name, page number
  - ❑ Double-click in top margin space → click on *Home* tab → right-justify cursor → return to *Design* tab → type first and last name, comma, click on Page Number icon → select *Current Position*→ click on plain number
- ❑ Include **right-justified heading** of Name, class period, date assignment is turned in, assignment title
- ❑ **Double-space** essay
  - ❑ Select *Home* tab → click on right corner of *Paragraph* menu → change *Line Spacing* to double
- ❑ Include **creative title** that is relevant to essay
  - ❑ What would your product review be titled in the magazine?
  - ❑ Centered, no **bold**, *italics*, <u>underlining</u>, or ALL CAPS
- ❑ **AT THE END OF YOUR ESSAY, TYPE TWO QUESTIONS/CONCERNS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE MR. COSTELLO TO COMMENT ON (BE SPECIFIC)**
- ❑ **Works cited page**
  - ❑ See OWL handout
- ❑ **Parenthetical References**
  - ❑ (see Costello's handout)

"Safe Bet" Paragraph Structure

- Establish the paragraph's topic
- Lead-in to 1st piece of info from source
- Include info from source
- Explain info's relevance to your key/topic
- Transition to next piece of info from source
- Include info from source
- Explain info's relevance to your key/topic
- Wrap-up this point before moving on to your next

Because of all the research you've done, and the complex topics you're dealing with, it's likely that you won't be able to do each of these things in one sentence each. It's more likely that your paragraphs will contain 10-12 sentences.

- **When using source info, don't forget to LEAD, INTEGRATE, DOCUMENT, COMMENT!!**
  - o Don't start or end paragraphs with source info
  - o Don't provide back-to-back source info
- **Note the expectation that the majority of writing comes from YOU, not the sources.**
- **Also note the expectation of two uses of sources per paragraph**

Content
- ❑ **Introduction**
  - ❑ Does the introduction begin with an attention-getting technique?
  - ❑ Does the introduction include background information on the product?
  - ❑ Does the introduction include a properly placed and informative thesis statement?
    - ❑ Should end the 1st paragraph
    - ❑ See thesis checkpoint for more info on what to include in the thesis
- ❑ **Body Paragraphs**
  - ❑ Do the body paragraphs follow the order established in the thesis statement?
  - ❑ Are the body paragraphs clearly established from each other?
    - ❑ Topic/transition sentences
  - ❑ Do the body paragraphs include the appropriate amount of depth of argument?
    - ❑ See "Safe Bet" Structure on previous page
  - ❑ Do the body paragraphs include appropriate ratio of your own analysis and source info?
- ❑ **Conclusion**
  - ❑ Does the conclusion restate the thesis?
    - ❑ Should begin the last paragraph
    - ❑ Should be reworded to avoid repetition
  - ❑ Does the conclusion revisit the attention-getter?
  - ❑ Does the conclusion include a new, larger point?

Mechanics
- ❑ Don't use **1st/2nd person**
  - ❑ includes the understood "you"
    - ❑ speaking directly to the reader
- ❑ Don't talk about the essay or information specifically
  - ❑ "In this essay," "these stats show," "the next feature is," etc.
- ❑ Show ability to use variety in sentence structure
  - ❑ Don't be so repetitive!
- ❑ Show a variety of vocabulary
  - ❑ Avoiding using forms of "to be" more than once per paragraph
- ❑ Use appropriate and high-level vocabulary
- ❑ Avoid contractions, incorrect spellings, incomplete or run-on sentences, etc.
  - ❑ this is a formal essay assignment
- ❑ Be sure to follow all guidelines discussed in class

Remember, as I **SKIM** your 1stFinal Copy, I will be using following rubric:

Content
- Development of idea, critical thinking, appropriate support
  - o Do you build your argument from a focused point of view?
  - o Do you think critically about the product instead of summarizing?
  - o Do you use examples that support and strengthen your point?
- Organization and focus, coherence, progression of ideas
  - o Is your organizational structure clear and logical?
  - o Is your organizational structure comfortable for the reader to follow?
  - o Do you use topic sentences, transitions to clarify connection between points?
  - o Do you follow a consistent point of view?

Introduction	5 pts.	Conclusion	5 pts.
❑ attention-getting technique ❑ background information ❑ thesis statement		❑ restated thesis ❑ revisit of attention-getter ❑ new, larger point	
Body Paragraphs	10 pts.	**Mechanics**	5 pts.
❑ follow thesis ❑ topic/transition sentences ❑ depth of argument ❑ audience concerns		❑ assignment guidelines ❑ formatting	

Costello   **4.28.09**
World Literature III

2nd **Final Copy Tips**

Product Review – Revision Techniques*(part of your Mechanics grade on the Final Draft)*

General
1. Make sure you've followed all previous guidelines
   a. Many 1st final copies ignored formatting guidelines (parenthetical references, intro/conclusion attempts, works cited page, heading/header, etc.)
2. Address comments from 1st Final Copy to **entire** essay
   a. Even if you received a high score on your 1st Final Copy, that merely means that at a quick glance/skim, you have the key components of solid content. Continue to apply the questions from that rubric to your entire essay.
3. Use OWL (Purdue's online writing lab) for more tips
   a. http://owl.english.purdue.edu/
4. Note the changes between the 1st and 2nd Final Copy by putting them **in bold.**
   a. The 2nd Final Copy must have significant changes in order to be considered a complete assignment

Before turning in your 2nd Final Copy on **Thursday, April 30th**, the following steps <u>must</u> be completed:
1. Address and improve upon aspects of writing noted by Mr. Costello on your 1st Final Copy rubric.
2. Address and improve upon aspects of writing noted by any previous guidelines regarding this assignment
3. Complete the following steps from the "Revising Content" table

Revising Content

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Do This</u>
1. Does the introduction grab the reader's attention, include background information, and provide a clear point of view?	• Put a **checkmark** by the sentences that get the reader interested • Put a **star** by any background information • **Underline** the thesis statement
2. Are the keys organized effectively?	• **Circle** each topic sentence • **Number** the features in order of importance
3. Does each feature have sufficient support?	• Draw an **arrow** toward each point of support
4. Is each piece of information's relevance explained?	• **Highlight** each explanation of relevance
5. Is a new, larger point made?	• **Box** the information that <u>only</u> appears in the conclusion

   a. Ask yourself the "Questions"
   b. Then, complete the "Do This"column **on the 1st Final Copy**
      i. If you are unable to complete these steps, it will show you what needs to be added to your essay
   c. Then, based on your markings, apply the Revision Techniques to your Final Draft

4. On your 1st Final Copy, highlight each time you use the following words:

a little bit	boring	of course	stuff	I	"to be" verbs
a lot	certainly	particularly	surely	Me	• am
actually	incidentally	phrase	that...	We	• is
all	interesting	predicament	thing	Us	• are
always	involved with	pretty	too	Our	• was
area	just	problem	totally	Ourselves	• were
as far as...concerned	kind of	somehow	tremendously	You	• will be
aspect	little	something like	very	Your	
at least	lots	somewhat	which...	You're	
awesome	nice	sort of	whole	Yourself	
big	obviously	specially		The understood "you"	

5. For your final draft, attempt to change, delete, or improve word choice by eliminating these words
   a. You don't need to change or delete them all
      i. Just show a significant attempt to improve!
      ii. **Bold** all changes made for the 2nd Final Copy

More Miscellaneous Tips:

- ❑ Do one of the following:
    - ❑ Read the essay aloud to yourself
    - ❑ Read the essay aloud to someone else
    - ❑ Have someone else read your essay aloud to you
        - ❑ Use this process to catch and correct awkward phrasing, organization and thoughts

- ❑ Only works cited in the essay may be listed on the Works Cited page

- ❑ All works listed on the Works Cited page must be used and cited in the essay

- ❑ don't use 1st or 2nd person
    - ❑ includes the understood "you"
        - ❑ speaking directly to the reader

- ❑ don't talk about the essay or assignment specifically
    - ❑ "In this essay" "This shows" "the next feature is" etc.
    - ❑ the reader shouldn't know this is an assignment!

- ❑ use variety in sentence structure
    - ❑ avoid lots of short, simple sentences
    - ❑ try and break free from the "safe bet" format a bit
    - ❑ rephrase your thesis statement
    - ❑ use different structures for your topic sentences

- ❑ avoid contractions, incorrect spellings, incomplete or run-on sentences, and all that fun stuff
    - ❑ *refer to Avoiding Run-Ons handout which is posted on the webpage*

- ❑ consider verb tense
    - ❑ make sure it is consistent (don't change from past → present in the same sentence/example)

- ❑ consider word choice
    - ❑ *refer to Word Choice tips handout which is posted on the webpage*

- ❑ *be sure to follow all guidelines previously discussed in class*

Costello
World Literature III
Research Paper Final Draft (due M 5/4)
What is due no later than the beginning of my class on Monday, May 4ᵗʰ:

You must turn in the folder for this assignment, with the following materials included:
Step #1
- o Place all research printouts, informational handouts, etc. from this project in the left-hand side of the folder (anything that is not a checkpoint)

Step #2
- o Place the following materials, organized so that <u>the most recent is on top</u>, in the right-hand side of the folder
  - o Thesis statement checkpoint
  - o Research list of sources checkpoint
  - o Outline checkpoint
  - o Peer Response Activity (2ⁿᵈ pd. only)
  - o 1ˢᵗ Final Copy
  - o Peer Response Activity (7ᵗʰ pd. only)
  - o 2ⁿᵈ Final Copy
  - o Peer Response Activity (2ⁿᵈ pd. only)
  - o Final Draft

Step #3
- o Give to Mr. Costello when asked. Then exhale.

What is due BEFORE 11:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 3rd:

You must turn in an electronic copy of what you gave Mr. Costello via www.turnitin.com

Step #1
- o Make sure you paper is saved using the following file title format:
- o Your last name – Research Essay Final Draft.doc
  - o Example
    - ▪ Alfery – Research Essay Final Draft.doc

Step #2
- o Go to www.turnitin.com and log in
  - o Forget your password? Check with Costello <u>before</u> the weekend!
- o Submit your paper to the assignment entitled Research Essay Final Draft
- o Please submit by uploading the file *(unless you wrote your essay on a program other than Microsoft Word)*
  - o *If you wrote your essay on a program other than Microsoft Word, please use the copy and paste method of submission.*
- o Remember: **your works cited page must be part of your document file**, so that it can be submitted along with the rest of the paper.

- o Remember: When uploading your file, **please use the creative title you have created** for your essay **when filling in the title box on the screen**.

Please follow carefully as you format your paper.
- ❑ **Margins** set at 1 inch
  - ❑ Select *Page Layout* tab →Click on *Margins* icon → select *Normal* layout
- ❑ Include **right-justified header** of Last Name, page number
  - ❑ Double-click in top margin space → click on *Home* tab → right-justify cursor → return to *Design* tab → type first and last name, comma, click on Page Number icon → select *Current Position*→ click on plain number
- ❑ Include **right-justified heading** of Name, class period, date assignment is turned in, assignment title
- ❑ **Double-space** essay
  - ❑ Select *Home* tab → click on right corner of *Paragraph* menu → change *Line Spacing* to double
- ❑ Include **creative title** that is relevant to essay
  - ❑ Centered, no **bold**, *italics*, underlining, or ALL CAPS
- ❑ **Works cited page (see OWL handout on citing sources)**

  - ❑ Should be final page of your essay

  - ❑ Should NOT be a separate electronic file

  - ❑ Entitle page "Works Cited"

  - ❑ List sources alphabetically

  - ❑ Double-space and reverse-indent

  - ❑ Refer to easybib.com for what pieces of information are needed for each type of source

- ❑ **Parenthetical Citations (see OWL handout on citing sources)**

  - ❑ Needed each time you are using information from a source (direct quoting, embedded quoting and/or paraphrasing)

  - ❑ First item from Works Cite page listing goes in parenthetical citation at end of sentence (usually the author's last name or article title)

  - ❑ Page number included in parenthetical citation if using a print source found in print

- ❑ **Follow all other guidelines given on handouts or during class**

Research Paper Final Draft Grading Rubric

Content [50 pts]
Development of your ideas (critical thinking/depth)
- Thesis Statement
    - Unclear **(-4)**
    - Not mentioned twice **(-2)**
    - Misplaced, adding to lack of clarity **(-1)**
- Source use
    - Section/info lacks sufficient source use **(-2 per)**
    - Section relies too much on sources **(-2 per)**
    - Source use is not explained **(-2 per)**
    - Source use does not help point **(-2 per)**
- Other **(scaled)**
    - Paper does not focus on similarities **or** differences
    - paper as a whole lacks depth
    - paper as a whole lacks clarity
    - title not creative, thought-provoking **(-1)**

Progression of your ideas
- Intro/conclusion
    - Intro lacks depth **(-2)**
    - lacks attention-getter **(-2)**
    - Conclusion lacks depth **(-2)**
    - Conclusion fails to make new, larger point **(-2)**
    - Redundant **(-2)**
- Organization
    - Does not follow thesis statement **(-5)**
    - Changes within paper **(-3)**
    - Does not follow logic **(-3)**

Mechanics [50 pts]
Language and vocabulary usage (scaled)
- Word repeated frequently
    - Especially "to be"
- vocab overly simple
- vocab overly vague
- vocab overly casual
- word choice creates confusion
- sentence structure repeated frequently
    - in topic sentences
    - in transition sentences
    - in general

Formatting, grammar, and mechanics
- format
    - incorrect title **(-1)**
    - incorrect header **(-1)**
    - incorrect works cited page format **(-2)**
    - incorrect parenthetical citation
    - incorrect bibliography citation
    - incorrect font size/style **(-2)**
    - incorrect margins **(-2)**
- sources
    - source listed, not used **(-4)**
    - source used, not listed **(-4)**
    - lacks 3 sources **(-4)**
    - insufficient source used **(-3)**
    - over 2 web-only sources **(-3)**
- other
    - use of 2nd person (just once) **(-15)**
    - run-on, fragment, incomplete sentence (just once) **(-15)**
    - unnecessary use of 1st person **(-5)**
- **THE SCALE**
    - **one-time error (probable typo) (-1/2)**
    - **occasional error (-1)**
    - **frequent error (-2)**
      habitual error (-4)

Student ID #: _____

Student Attitudes Toward Their Own Academic Writing Strengths/Weaknesses

1. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **your level of confidence** in the following aspects of your academic writing*

Writing Skill	Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
Thesis	1	2	3	4	5
Organization	1	2	3	4	5
Support	1	2	3	4	5
Analysis	1	2	3	4	5
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
Sentence Structure	1	2	3	4	5

2. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **your level of attention** to the following aspects of your academic writing during the writing process*

Writing Skill	Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
Thesis	1	2	3	4	5
Organization	1	2	3	4	5
Support	1	2	3	4	5
Analysis	1	2	3	4	5
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
Sentence Structure	1	2	3	4	5

3. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **the level of helpfulness** the following people provide during the writing process.*

Person	N/A (I do not seek their help)	Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
Teacher who assigned the work	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
A previous teacher	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
A parent	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
A classmate	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
A peer (not in the class)	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Other _____	N/A	1	2	3	4	5

Student Attitudes Toward Their Previous Peer Response Experiences

4. What is the purpose of peer response?

5. Check the formats in which you have participated in peer response

    _____ one-on-one discussion with peer (verbal feedback)
    _____ one-on-one evaluation sheets (written feedback)
    _____ group of three or more discussion (verbal feedback)
    _____ group of three or more evaluation sheet (written feedback)

6. Do you prefer verbal feedback, written feedback, or a combination of both? Why?

7. Based on previous experience, did you find your peers' comments useful? Why or why not?

8. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **the level of usefulness** you would expect a peer's comments to provide in helping improve your academic writing.*

	Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
Verbal feedback from peer	1	2	3	4	5
Written feedback from peer	1	2	3	4	5

9. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **the level of helpfulness** you would expect a peer to provide in the following aspects of your academic writing*

Writing Skill	Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
Thesis	1	2	3	4	5
Organization	1	2	3	4	5
Support	1	2	3	4	5
Analysis	1	2	3	4	5
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
Sentence Structure	1	2	3	4	5

Student Attitudes Toward Their Own Ability to Respond to Peers' Work

10. Based on previous experience, do you feel qualified to respond to a classmate's writing? Why or why not?

11. Based on previous experience, do you feel prepared to respond to a classmate's writing when asked to do so? Why or why not?

12. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **your ability** to help a peer with the following aspects of their academic writing*

Writing Skill	Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
Thesis	1	2	3	4	5
Organization	1	2	3	4	5
Support	1	2	3	4	5
Analysis	1	2	3	4	5
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
Sentence Structure	1	2	3	4	5

<u>Sample H</u>

Costello   **4.15.09**
World Literature III
<u>**Peer Response Activity – The Bones**</u>
There's a book called *A Community of* Writers that employs an analogy that compares
the writing process to the human body:

Body Part	**Writing Process**	**Shared Quality**
Bones	Thesis, Keys, Organization	Foundation/Structure
Muscles	Support, Analysis	Movement/Strength
Skin	Grammar, Mechanics	Polish/?

Peter Elbow, one of the authors of *A Community of Writers*, makes the argument that
even the most polished essay cannot conceal a flawed analysis or thesis in the same
way that perfect skin cannot hide someone's low muscle mass or bone strength.
However, the opposite can also be true. Just as someone with acne might be judged on
that fact alone, essays can sometimes be dismissed because of cosmetic concerns,
when, underneath the "skin," the essay has a strong foundation.
At this point in our research project, we are a few days away from completing the
researching phase. We're clearly still in the "bones" phase of the assignment, and so we
are going to try and help each other make a few final choices that will hopefully lead us
to those final few sources.
Purpose of Peer Response Activity:
- Ask questions that might lead the writer to consider new topics and ideas
- Provide an outside perspective on a peer's initial thesis, keys, and organization
- Offer any information we might have regarding their topic

Process of Peer Response Activity:
- The night before, each student will fill out their pre-activity sheet.
- Students will be placed in groups of 3 or 4
- In class, each student will respond to the other group members' pre-activity sheet
  in the following ways:
  - Ask at least 5 questions about the student's choices of cultures or keys
    - Questions should not lead to "yes" or "no" answers
  - Offer at least 3 ideas for further research
    - Alternative keys or cultures, more specific search terms, potentially
      fruitful resources, etc.
- Each student will then be able to use their peer response feedback in the final
  days of researching.
- After researching is completed, students will complete an informal journal
  response, reflecting on the peer response activity.

Student ID #:
Peer Response Activity – The Bones
Pre-Activity Sheet

What is your thesis statement?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate your level of confidence in your current thesis statement

Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5

What successes have you had in researching these cultures/keys?

_____

_____

_____

What struggles have you had in researching these cultures/keys?

_____

_____

_____

What other cultures/keys have you considered?

_____

_____

_____

Why did you abandon or rule out those cultures/keys?

_____

_____

_____

Student Writer ID #:   **Peer Responder ID #:**

Peer Response Activity – The Bones

5 Questions About the Writer's Current Cultures and/or Keys

- _____
  _____

- _____
  _____

- _____
  _____

- _____
  _____

- _____
  _____

3 Ideas for Further Research

- _____
  _____

- _____
  _____

- _____
  _____

Costello   **4.27.09**
World Literature III

Peer Response Activity – The Muscles

There's a book called *A Community of Writers* that employs an analogy that compares the writing process to the human body:

Body Part	Writing Process	Shared Quality
Bones	Thesis, Keys, Organization	Foundation/Structure
Muscles	Support, Analysis	Movement/Strength
Skin	Grammar, Mechanics	Polish/?

Peter Elbow, one of the authors of *A Community of Writers*, makes the argument that even the most polished essay cannot conceal a flawed analysis or thesis in the same way that perfect skin cannot hide someone's low muscle mass or bone strength.

However, the opposite can also be true. Just as someone with acne might be judged on that fact alone, essays can sometimes be dismissed because of cosmetic concerns, when, underneath the "skin," the essay has a strong foundation.

At this point in our research project, we have established the "bones" and have made our first attempt at flexing our "muscles." Writers use support and analysis to strengthen their argument. **The stronger the support and analysis, the stronger the argument!** So we are going to try and help each other make a few choices that will hopefully help improve our support and analysis in our 2nd final copy.

Purpose of Peer Response Activity:
- Ask questions that might lead the writer to consider new support and analysis
- Provide an outside perspective on a peer's strength of argument
- Offer any suggestions that might strengthen the writer's argument

Process of Peer Response Activity:
- Students will be placed in groups of 3 or 4
- During class the day before, students will fill out their pre-activity sheet
- The night before, each student will read the pre-activity sheet and 1st final copy of each member in their group.
- In class, each student will respond to the other group members' pre-activity sheet in the following ways:
    - Take 5 minutes with each member's draft, and write down:
        - 3-4 questions about the writer's support/analysis
            - Questions should not lead to "yes" or "no" answers
        - 2-3 ideas for support/analysis improvement
            - Alternative aspects of keys/cultures, places to more clearly explain/analyze, etc.
    - Then, groups will share these questions/ideas as an entire group through **discussion**
        - peer responders ask the writer their questions/share their ideas
        - 5 minutes per group member
- Each student will then be able to use their peer response feedback while writing their 2nd Final Copy.
- Sometime in the next week, students will complete an informal journal response, reflecting on the peer response activity.

Peer Response Activity – The Muscles
Pre-Activity Sheet

Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate your level of confidence in your current introduction

Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5

What strategy or approach did you take to get the reader's attention in the introduction?

_____

_____

_____

What question about your introduction would you like your peer reviewer(s) to consider?

_____

_____

_____

Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate your level of confidence in your current keys

Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5

Which key(s) most effectively support your argument? Why?

_____

_____

_____

Which key(s) least effective support your argument? Why?

_____

_____

_____

Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate your level of confidence in your current conclusion

Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5

What strategy or approach did you take to try and make a new, larger point in your conclusion?

_____

_____

_____

What question about your introduction would you like your peer reviewer(s) to consider?

_____

_____

_____

Student Writer ID #: _____ **Peer Responder ID #:** _____

Peer Response Activity – The Muscles

3-4 Questions About the Writer's Current Keys, Support, and Analysis

- _____
  _____
  _____

- _____
  _____
  _____

- _____
  _____
  _____

- _____
  _____
  _____

2-3 Ideas for Improvement of Keys, Support, Analysis

- _____
  _____
  _____

- _____
  _____
  _____

- _____
  _____
  _____

World Literature III
Research Essay

Writer's ID#:_____

Peer Responder's ID#:_____

Peer Response Activity – The Skin

First, the <u>WRITER</u> should complete the following survey:

Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate your level of confidence in your current assignment formatting (font, margins, Works Cited page, parenthetical citations, etc.)

Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5

What aspects of the assignment formatting are you unsure of?

_____

_____

_____

Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate your level of confidence in your grammar and mechanics (sentence structure, subject/verb agreement, spelling, etc.)

Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5

What aspects of grammar/mechanics are you unsure of?

_____

_____

_____

Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate your level of confidence in your word choice (usage, variety, level, etc.)

Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5

What aspects of word choice are you unsure of?

_____

_____

_____

Then, give this form and your 2nd Final Copy to your Peer Response Partner, and they'll complete the rest

Instructions for the PEER RESPONDER:

Complete the following by writing directly on the 2nd Final Copy:

1) Underline their thesis statement in the introduction and conclusion.

2) Star the first time they mention the topic of each paragraph.

3) Draw an arrow from each use of source info to the explanation of its relevance/importance

4) Squiggle Underline any sentence that you suspect to be fragments, incomplete, or run-on sentences

5) Circle any spelling errors you find (includes usage errors)

6) Circle any use of 1st or 2nd person

7) Circle any contractions

8) Circle any punctuation errors

Complete the following by writing on this response sheet:

9) What words/phrases does the writer repeat often? **(please mark them in the 2nd Final Copy as well)**

8a) What words/phrases could be used to replace them?

10) What casual language does the writer use? **(please highlight/underline in the paper as well)**

9a) What words/phrases could be used to replace them?

11) What simple language does the writer use? **(please highlight/underline in the paper as well)**

10a) What words/phrases could be used to replace them?

Format Checklist: place a check ✔ next to each item that is correctly used in the paper. Place an **X** next to items that are incorrect. Be sure to point out how they can fix their mistake!

❑ Correct title format
   How can it be fixed? _____

❑ Correct header format
   How can it be fixed? _____

❑ Correct heading format
   How can it be fixed? _____

❑ Correct margins format
   How can it be fixed? _____

❑ Correct font format
   How can it be fixed? _____

❑ Correct Works Cited Page format
   How can it be fixed? _____

❑ Correct parenthetical reference format
   How can it be fixed? _____

Writer's strengths:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Suggestions for improvement:

_____
_____
_____
_____

<div align="center">Sample K</div>

Student Attitudes Toward Their RESEARCH ESSAY FINAL DRAFT'S Strengths/Weaknesses

13. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **your level of confidence** in the following aspects of your RESEARCH ESSAY FINAL DRAFT.*

Writing Skill	Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
Thesis	1	2	3	4	5
Organization	1	2	3	4	5
Support	1	2	3	4	5
Analysis	1	2	3	4	5
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
Sentence Structure	1	2	3	4	5

14. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **your level of attention** to the following writing skills during the entire writing process of your RESEARCH ESSAY.*

Writing Skill	Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
Thesis	1	2	3	4	5
Organization	1	2	3	4	5
Support	1	2	3	4	5
Analysis	1	2	3	4	5
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
Sentence Structure	1	2	3	4	5

15. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **the level of helpfulness** the following people provided during the entire writing process of your RESEARCH ESSAY.*

Person	N/A (I do not seek their help	Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
Teacher who assigned the work	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
A previous teacher	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
A parent	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
A classmate	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Your peer response partner(s)	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
A sibling	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Other _____	N/A	1	2	3	4	5

Student Attitudes Toward This Peer Response Activity

16. Check the formats in which you participated in peer response for your RESEARCH ESSAY:

_____ one-on-one discussion with peer (verbal feedback)
_____ one-on-one evaluation sheets (written feedback)
_____ group of three or more discussion (verbal feedback)
_____ group of three or more evaluation sheet (written feedback)

17. Would you have preferred a different format of peer response? Why or why not?

18. Check the stage in the writing process in which you participated in peer response:

_____ The Bones (thesis, organization, keys)

_____ The Muscles (support, analysis)

_____ The Skin (formatting, grammar, word choice)

19. Would you have preferred to participate in peer response during a different stage of the writing process? Why or why not?

20. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate* **the level of usefulness** *your peer responder(s)' comments were in the RESEARCH ESSAY.*

Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5

21. What aspects of the peer response activity ultimately helped your RESEARCH ESSAY FINAL DRAFT? Explain.

22. What aspects of the peer response activity did not positively affect your RESEARCH ESSAY FINAL DRAFT? Explain.

Student Attitudes Toward Their Own Ability to Respond to Peers' Work

1. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **the level of clarity** in the peer response activity's purpose.*

Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5

2. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **the level of clarity** in the peer response activity's directions.*

Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5

3. Did you feel qualified to respond to your partner(s)' writing? Why or why not?

4. *Using the following 1-5 scale, please indicate **the level of value** you found peer response to have in your writing process.*

Very weak	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5

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    <u>the Junior and Senior High School</u>. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1988.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Ryan James Costello

Education:

Master of Arts in English, Indiana University. August 2009
Concentration: Writing

Bachelor of Science in Education and Allied Profession, University of Dayton. May 2003
Concentration: Secondary Education- Integrated Language Arts

Experience:

High School English Teacher, 2003-present
Roncalli High School, Indianapolis, IN
Classes taught: 10th grade English, World Literature, American Literature, 12th grade
English, British Literature, Advanced Placement Literature