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Peer Response Groups in the ESOL Classroom : A Study

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Karin Dorothy Krueger for the
Master of Arts in TESOL presented June 22, 1992.

Title: Peer Response Groups in the ESOL Classroom: A Study

APPROVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

Marjorie Terdal, Chair

Beatrice T. Oshika

Anthony W. Wolk

Sandra Rosengrant

    This qualitative study is introduced through a discussion of
peer response groups and the researcher's interest in them. The
guiding question of whether peer response groups are as useful for
teaching writing in ESOL classrooms as in first language classrooms
is stated along with supplementary research questions. These are

followed by a review of relevant theories and summaries of peer response group history, social and cultural factors, and research done on peer response groups in first and additional language classrooms.

The methodological design used for gathering data from six perspectives is descriptive. Data for four of six components of the study were gathered from an advanced academic ESOL writing class and include information from three individuals in the class, the peer response groups, the students, and their instructor. Other data were gathered from the ESOL writing instructor community and from a participant in a required upper division writing class. Data were gathered through class observations, interviews, questionnaires, transcripts, surveys and a journal.

Results are given and discussed from each of the six perspectives. The personal and cultural backgrounds of the three individuals studied are found to influence their various reactions to peer response groups. Profiles of groups and students are created through quantified transcripts of peer response group interaction. These profiles are used to discuss ESOL peer response groups and to propose certain roles students took within them.

The usefulness of peer response groups in the advanced academic ESOL writing classroom is discussed. The conclusion of the study includes recommendations concerning their use. The limitations of this study are included.

PEER RESPONSE GROUPS IN THE ESOL CLASSROOM:

A STUDY

by

KARIN DOROTHY KRUEGER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
TESOL

Portland State University
1992

TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES:

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Useko jur jur to my husband for his confidence, to Mother Earth for her proofreading skills, and to Olga, the only one who could stay up with me all night.

Finally, if there is any beauty in this study, let it be dedicated to Tracy, bright star who fell before your time.

> Each profession, intellectual or manual, deserves consideration, whether it requires painful physical effort or manual dexterity, wide knowledge or the patience of an ant. Ours, like that of the doctor, does not allow for any mistake. You don't joke with life, and life is both body and mind. To warp a soul is as much a sacrilege as murder. Teachers -- at kindergarten level, as at university level -- form a noble army accomplishing daily feats, never praised, never decorated. An army forever on the move, forever vigilant. Any army without drums, without gleaming uniforms. This army, thwarting traps and snares, everywhere plants the flag of knowledge and morality.
> Mariama Bâ, <u>So long a letter</u>.

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INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Language classes are made up of instructors, who are generally
the authorities based on knowledge of their target language, and
students, who often perceive themselves as subordinate to the
instructors as they do not know the target language as well. In
academic language classes, one of the skills that language
instructors focus on is writing. Until recently, in English language
classes in the United States, the pattern that instructors often
followed to teach writing was to have students write, collect the
writing, give feedback and/or evaluate the writing, and return it to
the student. Giving feedback and evaluating students' writing has
been the sole prerogative of the instructor, and this person has also
usually been the only reader, or audience, of the writing.

Some language classes are still structured as described; other
instructors have modified their approach to teaching writing. In the
1970s, some English language instructors began having students
respond to their peers' writing. Instructors asked groups of
students to read and make comments about each other's writing,
hoping to make students aware of their own ability to give feedback

to writing and widening students' audience of readers. These sessions would occur along with, or in the place of, the instructors' feedback and evaluation. The procedure of having students share their writing and give each other feedback about it is referred to as using "peer response groups."

The use of peer response groups in language classrooms in the United States began in English classrooms where instructors were helping students write in their first language. Since then, however, instructors of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students have also implemented it in the classroom.

Reactions of instructors and language classroom researchers to peer response groups in English as a first language writing classrooms are varied (see, for example, Cavanagh & Styles, 1983; Rothschild & Klingenberg, 1990; Webb, 1982). Some have stated that it is an ideal method to use in teaching writing. It leads the students to take greater responsibility for their work, makes them more independent, and encourages them to share ideas. Arguments against using peer response groups include questions regarding their effectiveness, their challenge to instructors' authority, their waste of precious class time, and some instructors' belief that students are unable to give meaningful evaluations of one another's writing.

Reactions to peer response groups in ESOL writing classrooms have been similarly conflicting (see, for example, Kohn and Vajda, 1975; Witbeck, 1976). Supporters stress the natural quality of the language that students use in discussing each other's writing, and the self-confidence they develop through supportive interaction

with their peers. They believe that these groups improve the students' revising and editing abilities, and that students develop the skill of solving problems in groups rather than looking for an authority. The quantity of writing students do may also increase, because there is more than one person to respond to it: having students write multiple drafts becomes less time-consuming for instructors if peers can respond to one or more of them.

Critics (Keh, 1990; Kohn & Vajda, 1975) counter that ESOL instructors lose control and/or the respect of their students in peer response group situations, and that university-bound students do not get the practice they need in English rhetorical styles. They also state that students are reluctant to criticize their peers' writing and that they lack the expertise to do so. The students often focus on surface changes rather than meaning issues, and they may suggest changes in writing that the instructor would consider to be appropriate as it was first written.

From the literature on ESOL writing classrooms and from discussions at ESOL conferences, it appears that many ESOL instructors have heard of peer response groups and report similar reactions to them as those cited in research. Some instructors are convinced that it is a useful activity; others wish it were, but remain unconvinced that it can work as well as or better than their own evaluations. Still others are convinced that it is not useful at all. This study was based on observations which occurred on a daily basis in an ESOL college level writing classroom whose instructor found peer response groups to be useful and effective. This

information was combined with that from interviews and questionnaires of the ESOL students, a survey of other ESOL college level writing instructors, and the experience of the author as a participant in an English writing class response group.

BACKGROUND

From ESOL journals, ESOL conference presentations, and ESOL class discussions, it appears that peer response groups continue to be a topic of interest to the ESOL community. As mentioned above, some instructors are supportive of using peer response groups in ESOL classrooms, and others are not. My interest in doing this study came from reflections on my teaching experience and from my interest in sharing writing with my peers.

I first read about peer response groups when I returned to the United States after three years of teaching large ESOL classes for the U.S. Peace Corps in northern Cameroon. After learning how it could be facilitated, I imagined how successful peer response groups might enable an instructor to help several classes of sixty or seventy students receive some type of feedback to their writing several times a week. Creating a non-hierarchical situation in the classroom fit with my approach to teaching, and I also believed that the students might be able to respond to each other's writing in ways that an instructor could not.

Writing papers in graduate school was another experience which increased my interest in peer response groups. Professors

would write criticism on a paper, and I would often feel that I could have explained what I had written, except that the communication was essentially one-way, from them to me. Sometimes I felt that what I had written was legitimate, but that this particular professor, as the sole reader, had not perceived it as such. Out of twelve graduate classes I experienced only two class periods during which class time was allowed for sharing papers, yet this writing was what many students had devoted the most time toward outside of class.

During my last term of formal course work, another student suggested that we share our TESOL Methods papers before turning them in. As I prepared the final draft of my paper, I found myself thinking that I had better revise certain sections, so that the paper would be more interesting. Then I realized that as my audience had broadened, my goals for writing had also. For the professor, I was trying to write clearly and document myself, but when I knew my peer would read my writing, I began to try and make the writing interesting as well.

As an instructor, I knew it was impossible to experience every activity before using it in the classroom, but using peer response groups with ESOL students seemed to be especially complex and controversial, perhaps because of the group interaction and the required student-centered class. Because of the effect a larger audience had on my own writing, peer response groups interested me as a potential participant as well as an instructor.

My conclusion was to design a study of peer response groups. I would observe an instructor who used them in an ESOL classroom, and also participate in such a group. A professor offered me a chance to participate in an upper division required writing class which met in these groups twice a week, and I contacted an ESOL writing instructor who used peer response groups in an upper level writing class. This person agreed to let me observe his class for one term. It appeared the study would be beneficial for my own education, and pertinent to the ESOL field and instructors.

The study I designed was qualitative. Qualitative studies are often anecdotal and subjective, and do not have the definitive element that quantitative studies do. An example of a quantitative study on peer response groups is one whose results indicated that the ethnic background of an instructor had no effect on the college students' attitudes while in these groups, demonstrated by statistics run on several questionnaires (Cheatham & Jordan, 1979). A quantitative study such as this is reassuring in its yes/no result. Despite the problem of subjectivity and less reliability, however, designing a qualitative study enabled me to view peer response groups from the different perspectives of the students, the instructor, and a participant, and to describe what I observed.

A quantitative study would have been aimed at a conclusion about peer response groups in general, with little consideration for them in the context of a particular instructor and students. The success of peer response groups appeared to depend upon three components -- the personalities of the individual students, the

realizations of their personalities when placed in a particular group, and the instructors' preparations for and actions during and after the group meetings (George, 1984; Berkenkotter, 1984). A qualitative study appeared better able to capture these dynamics than a quantitative study, which would have attempted to measure and correlate variables. For these reasons, I chose to do a qualitative study of peer response groups.

Some ESOL writing instructors use peer response groups and believe they are effective; others have tried them and have not found them particularly useful. In this study, I saw the chance for what I hoped would be an interesting comparison: observations of ESOL peer response groups in an advanced writing classroom, and my own experience as a student in such a situation. In the research literature, there were no comparisons between peer response groups in English and ESOL writing classrooms, and no case studies of an ESOL classroom in which the instructor and the students were interviewed as the class progressed. My hope was that this study would contribute some new and interesting information about peer response groups in ESOL writing classes to the TESOL community.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

"Peer response groups," an activity which is also called peer evaluation, group feedback, and peer critique (although some of these titles reflect different reasons for which the groups are formed), refers to the organization of small non-hierarchical groups

of writers who share their writing with each other and give each other feedback about this writing.

ESOL refers to English for Speakers of Other Languages, or English classes for people who speak another language besides English as their first language. TESOL refers to the teachers, or instructors of these people.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main question guiding the research was this:

Given that peer response groups are believed to be useful for teaching writing in first language classrooms in the United States, does this procedure appear to be as useful for teaching writing in ESOL classrooms?

Following are specific inquiries to help answer this question:

1. Peer Response Groups in the ESOL Classroom

A. When the ESOL students are in peer response groups, what are they doing?

B. When they discuss writing, what do ESOL students give each other feedback about?

C. Are there representative peer response group types, and if so, what are they?

D. Are there representative individual types within the peer response groups, and if so, what are they?

E. What effect does participation in peer response groups have on students' revisions?

2. Students in an ESOL Writing Class

A. After participating in peer response groups, will the students find them useful or not, and for what reasons?

B. What changes will occur in the students' desire to write, their perceptions of themselves as writers, their desire for an audience and their feelings about sharing their writing after participating in peer response groups?

C. How do students react to reading their writing aloud?

D. How does these students' participation in peer response groups compare with their participation in class?

E. As measured on a holistic evaluation scale, does the students' writing improve during the term?

3. Three Individuals in an ESOL Writing Class

A. What experiences have these individuals had before they come into university ESOL writing classes that appear to affect their experiences in peer response groups?

B. What is their approach to writing, and how does their approach relate to peer response group activities?

C. What social and cultural factors seem relevant to these individuals' experiences in peer response groups?

D. What insights do the interviews reveal about these individuals' experiences in peer response groups, and how can this information be of help to future ESOL teachers?

4. An ESOL Writing Instructor's approach, design, and procedure

A. Why does this instructor choose to use peer response groups in the ESOL writing classroom?

B. How does this instructor prepare for and facilitate peer response groups in the ESOL classroom?

C. Do the observations indicate anything that might cause this particular instructor to be more or less successful in facilitating peer response groups, and if so, what?

5. The ESOL Writing Instructor Community

A. What percentage of ESOL writing instructors find peer response groups to be useful in the ESOL writing classroom?

B. Are there factors that the ESOL writing instructors who use peer response groups appear to have in common?

C. What support or criticism of peer response groups do the ESOL instructors give, and how does this correspond with research on peer response groups and with this study?

6. Writing, Sharing and Responding through a Participant's Eyes

A. What is it like to be a participant in a peer response group?

B. What changes will occur in my desire to write, my perception of myself as a writer, my desire for an audience to my

writing and my feelings about sharing my writing after participating in peer response groups?

C. How do my experiences as a participant compare with those of the three individuals I interview?

D. What comparisons can be made between the peer response groups in ESOL and non-ESOL classrooms?

This is qualitative study based on observations of an ESOL writing classroom, interviews with members of the class, surveys of ESOL writing instructors in higher education in this state, and entries in a journal written while participating in a peer response group. It is possible that I end with what seems to be a current problem in the United States: so much information about something from so many different perspectives that it is impossible to conclude anything. My hope is that I can pull the different perspectives together into one colorful but coherent picture, and that this picture will be useful to others interested in TESOL and/or peer response groups, either for contemplation or as a basis for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much of the information on peer response groups is not actual research, but rather a discussion of theories relevant to their use. Organizing groups in the classroom implies that interaction among students is desirable, so it is important to know if this is true. Any technique used to teach writing must conform to theories of cognitive development and to theories about the process of writing. When and why these groups were developed is important, as well as the specifics of how they are adapted to different classroom situations. Social and cultural factors which influence individual and group interaction are relevant. It is necessary to know of research that has been done on peer response groups. In this chapter I will summarize this information.

THEORIES RELEVANT TO THE USE OF PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

Theories of Cognitive Development

Researchers who discuss the theoretical foundations of peer response groups base them on the writings of the Russian developmental psychologist and semiotician Lev Semenovic Vygotsky (1896-1934) (cited in DiPardo & Freedman, 1988; Wertsch, 1985a).

Wertsch (1985a) identifies three general theories that Vygotsky used to approach specific issues: 1) reliance on a genetic or developmental method; 2) the claim that higher mental processes in the individual have their origin in social processes; and 3) the claim that mental processes can only be understood if people understand the tools and signs which mediate them. The theory that is important to peer response groups is the second, which credits cognitive development to social interaction rather than to intrinsic growth as other theories would. Wertsch (1985a) states that Vygotsky wanted to reform the field of psychology according to assumptions by Karl Marx: "in order to understand the individual, one must first understand the social relations in which the individual exists" (p 58).

A component of Vygotsky's second theory was the "zone of proximal development" (DiPardo & Freedman, 1988, p. 129). He was interested in how "those functions that have not yet matured but are . . . in the embryonic state" could be observed in children while they were asked to solve problems with a care-taker (Wertsch, 1985a, p. 67). Wertsch (1985a) outlines stages, based on Vygotsky's theories, of four preschool children working with their American mothers: 1) situation so different for adult and child that communication is difficult; 2) child seems to share in adult's basic understanding of task; 3) child can make inferences from adult's directives; and 4) child takes over complete responsibility for the task. (p. 163).

Another component of Vygotsky's second theory was the notion of "scaffolding," or development-facilitating interaction that occurs

between children and their care-takers to guide them gradually from this first stage to the last one. DiPardo & Freedman (1988) believe that this notion of scaffolding transfers directly from the former situation to peer response groups, with the group members filling the roles of child and caretaker depending on their relative development to complete tasks. "Vygotsky's emphasis on the social nature of learning suggests that learning to write is much more than simply absorbing bits of knowledge or mastering discrete skills" (DiPardo & Freedman, 1988, p. 130). Peers are able to provide scaffolding for each other, although these social interactions "are far less likely to occur in school-based learning" (DiPardo & Freedman, 1988, p. 131).

Elementary classroom observations (Forman & Cazden, 1985) conclude similarly that "peer interactions . . . may be especially important in school because of limitations and rigidities characteristic of adult-child interactions in that institutional setting" (p. 344). They point out that the students rarely gave directions or asked questions of teachers, and that the only context in which the children could reverse these roles to allow the social interaction that Vygotsky believed was essential for development of higher mental processes was during activities with their peers.

Hickmann (1985) outlines three subdivisions of Vygotsky's theory of social interaction, stressing 1) the relationship between social interaction and higher mental processes; 2) the linguistic mediation of both kinds of processes; and 3) the multifunctionality of language. As examples of the multifunctionality of language,

Hickmann elicited stories from children ages four to seven to demonstrate how young children are developing intralinguistic and metapragmatic skills through language. In a discussion of peer response groups, Danis (1988) states that students' conversations during peer response groups may often be meeting other social needs as well as being directed toward the primary goal of commenting on writing, another example of the multifunctionality of language.

Teachers who facilitate peer response groups in the classroom base this approach on Vygotsky's second theory or similar theories which promote the relationship between cognitive development and social interaction. Peer response groups allow for social interaction to occur, and peers seem to create Vygotsky's scaffolding for each other. According to these theories, peer interaction helps students progress through stages of cognitive development, including those involved in the process of writing.

Theories of Writing

In order to propose how writing should be taught, it is necessary to look at current theories on how people write. According to Faigley & Witte (1981), for many years teachers generally saw writing as a linear process consisting of prewriting (i.e., making an outline), writing, and editing. Evidence from protocol analysis (recording writers' spoken thoughts as they write), however, showed that this was not the case (Flower & Hayes, 1980; Perl, 1979). Flower & Hayes conclude that the "discovery process is a myth," and state that writers do not find, but create meaning (p.

21). Perl observes that her students' talking "led to writing, which led to reading, which led to planning, which led again to writing" (p. 324). In A Writer Teaches Writing (1968), Murray suggests that writers find topics not through rules, but through the act of writing. Other studies have demonstrated that ESOL students appear to use the same writing strategies as students writing in their first language (see, for example, Perl 1979; Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1983).

For teachers following current theories, the information from this research changed their approach to teaching writing. Hairston (1982) proposed a "new paradigm of conventional wisdom for teaching writing" (p. 82). Teachers should focus on the writing process; view writing as recursive rather than linear; encourage a variety of writing modes (expressive as well as expository); and base their teaching on linguistic research (Hairston, 1982, p. 82). Because research on ESOL writers indicates that they use the same strategies as people writing in their first language, Hairston's paradigm should apply to teaching ESOL as well.

The audience influences how and what writers write. Kroll (1978) compares the stages that he observed writers progressing through with the stages that Swiss developmental psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980) observed in children's speech. Kroll points out that beginning writers tend to think primarily of themselves and therefore write primarily for themselves: ego-centric speech has its counterpart in ego-centric writing. Flowers (1979) states similarly that writers move from writer-based prose to reader-based prose as they write more and for different audiences.

In traditionally structured English classrooms, the teacher is often students' only audience. Graves (1984) compares this situation to that of the welfare system in the United States: "writing assistance is needed, but the way it is administered often leads to humiliation and dependency on the part of those who receive it" (p. 43). In a study of teachers' written responses to students' writing, Sommers (1982) concludes that "the teacher holds a license for vagueness while the student is commanded to be specific" (p. 153) and notes that despite the amount of time teachers spend writing comments on papers, it is not readily obvious if they improve students' writing or not. In a similar article on teachers' written responses to ESOL students, Zamel (1985) found that "teachers are so distracted by language-related local problems that they often correct these without realizing that much larger meaning-related problems have escaped their notice" (p. 86). Other studies have concluded that the traditional written comments on or at the end of writing papers are often misunderstood or never read (see, for example, Butler, 1980; Chapin, 1988).

Peer response groups give students a chance to write for a variety of audiences, and often to write several drafts. Social interaction allows negotiation of meaning to take place. Reisen (1990) writes that peer response groups help students take responsibility for their own learning, become more independent, and share experiences to a greater extent.

Writing teachers often divide the purposes of classroom writing into categories. Britton et al (1975) have proposed an

alternative to what they cite as the "time-honoured four types of intention which correspond to four types of discourse: Exposition, Argument, Description, and Narration" (p. 4). These categories are "not useful for studying the emergence of mature writers from young writers," they state, because they are derived from finished products of professionals and are "profoundly prescriptive," showing people how they should write with little inclination to observe the writing process (p. 4). In their place, they propose a functional "dynamic three-term scale:" communicative writing "to get things done"; 2) expressive writing "with feeling"; and 3) poetic writing "an art medium" (p. 11). Elbow (1973) uses this scale when discussing writing groups in Writing Without Teachers.

HISTORY OF PEER RESPONSE GROUPS IN ENGLISH AND ESOL CLASSROOMS

Teachers began using peer response groups in first language writing classrooms in the 1960s, when student-centered learning became popular. Their beginnings are often connected with Peter Elbow, Ken Macrorie and Donald Murray (Gere, 1987). Peer response groups are recent developments in the classroom as far as being part of the curriculum, and yet similar groups were found in colonial America. Groups met to respond to writing concerning political events. Documented examples include Congress writing the U.S. Constitution (1787), and, more recently, a group of businessmen at the University of Michigan who met during the U.S. intervention in

Cuba (1896), and the Philippines (1907) (Gere, 1987). Gere also notes college composition classes that met to discuss and critique themes at Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania in 1895, and similar classes in rhetoric at Johns Hopkins University and in composition at Middlebury College in 1914. In all of these classes students' writing was "read from and criticized" (p. 16).

Gere states that "four discrete philosophies" have formed the basis for the growth in writing groups: "humanism, social meliorism, developmentalism, and social efficiency" (p. 25). Among those concerned with humanism was Kenneth Bruffee, who believed that the writing groups involve "students in each other's intellectual, academic and social development" (Bruffee, 1978, p. 447). "Collaborative learning," he writes, "harnesses the powerful educative force that is largely ignored by traditional forms of education, and it provides the social context in which normal discourse occurs" (Bruffee, 1984, p. 638; 644). Social meliorism was a movement to counter social Darwinism; its proponents believed, rather than letting laws of natural selection apply to all society, that "humans should use their intelligence to intervene and foster social progress" (Gere, 1987, p. 21). Ken Macrorie, who advocates peer response groups in Writing To Be Read based his arguments on social meliorism. The cognitive psychologists Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories on children's social and intellectual growth in response to interaction with other humans have contributed to developmentalism. Social efficiency consists of applying "scientific systems of management to education" (Gere, p. 23). It is out of

social efficiency that the concern for developing students' writing skills comes.

Elbow's thoughts in <u>Writing Without Teachers</u> (1973) developed from years of writing comments on papers in academic situations and wondering "whether it could really be trusted, whether it really was useful" (p. 118). Elbow compares writing to one person, a teacher, to "writing in darkness and silence" (p. 77). He states that good writing often goes against what writing theories say, and that it is better to trust facts than theory. These facts are the readers' actual reactions to writing as they experience it in peer response groups.

As with many language classroom activities, peer response groups seem to have spread from English language classrooms into ESOL classrooms in the late 1960s or early 1970s. Kohn & Vajda (1975) encourage ESOL teachers to use "peer mediated instruction" as an alternative to the "large-scale drill-oriented lessons" which were apparently common in ESOL classrooms of that time (p. 379). Although he refers to it as "peer correction," emphasizing criterion-based feedback over reader-based feedback, Witbeck (1976) also encourages "some kind of two-way discussion" about his students' writing as it results in "more responsible written work" and "fosters a more constructive classroom atmosphere" (p. 321). With a teacher "marking errors," Witbeck states that his students' main goal was "getting yet another homework assignment off [the] agenda" (p. 321).

Regardless of their origin, whether in the 1960s or much earlier, many English and ESOL teachers have heard of peer response groups, have used them in the classroom, and are implementing them regularly.

FIELD GUIDE TO PEER RESPONSE GROUPS IN WRITING CLASSROOMS

There are different ways to organize peer response groups in response to different situations. In one protyptical situation, writers gather in a group to share their writing. In an ideal situation, such as Elbow (1981) suggests, the group will be outside of an academic environment, but most research has been on groups within classrooms. In the English class I participated in, groups were allowed to self-select; in the ESOL classroom, the teacher selected the groups himself to insure variation in ethnic background and gender. Elbow emphasizes that the group should have no authority figure, and everyone's opinion should have equal importance. Concerning the groups that he organizes in the English writing classroom, Wolk & Reese (1991) explained that their students meet by themselves: "Our absence is essential."

During a response meeting, people share their writing and receive feedback. A typical group might have three to six members. The writers read their work aloud. Elbow (1981) insists that this is very important, as it "makes [writers] take responsibility for [their] words" (p. 23). Writers provide other group members with copies of

their writing to help them follow along and make marks on for later reference.

Concerning group member's feedback, Elbow (1981) divides it into two categories: criterion-based and reader-based feedback. Criterion-based feedback would include readers' questions about organization and language use. People giving reader-based feedback describe how the words affected them. Criterion-based feedback is the kind people most often get from teachers, Elbow states, and it is useful, but limited. Reader-based feedback holds "the main advantages and pleasures of the whole feedback process" (p. 245). It is "more trustworthy, because you are asking only what [readers] saw and what was happening to them as they read" (p. 246). He recommends that a group try to give each writer both kinds of feedback whenever possible.

Each person needs to have equal time for reading and getting feedback in each group session. Feedback is never wrong or right, Elbow (1973) writes, and "acceptance and discussion of different reactions to writing can lead to an acceptance of diversity among the members" (p. 12). Writers are not obliged to take the group's advice, although Elbow (1981) suggests that the best revisions come from reader-based criterion, after "you finally discover what it feels like to be in your reader's skin" (p. 269).

A successful peer response group is one consisting of people who have become committed to helping each other through sharing their writing, who give all members equal amounts of group time, and who develop trust and confidence in one another proportional to

the time they spend sharing their writing (Elbow, 1981, p. 276). This model, however, may be modified in a classroom. Keh (1990) suggests that it is necessary to "train ESL students" how to separate lower and higher concerns in each other's writing, as the surface type problems seem easier for students to discuss but are not as beneficial to them as content problems (p. 298). Neubert & McNelis (1990) have developed an "organizational system" of focusing peers on the feedback they are to give which they call "praise-question-polish" (p. 52). Suggestions for the classroom are typically focused on encouraging criterion-based feedback, often to the expense of reader-based feedback.

Teachers who select the groups may choose to form different groups for each session. Some teachers have students pass their writing around to receive written and/or oral comments rather than having them read aloud and make copies. Some teachers can give explicit written or oral directions about the feedback that students are to give each other. In developing countries, students may have to write out any copies by hand, so it could be better to have group members pass their papers around or simply listen to each other's readings. These variations can be adapted to fit with particular teaching situations. In a classroom situation it would seem impossible to create a prototypical non-authoritarian peer response group because someone must organize the activity. Implicitly it will be seen as required. This, however, does not mean it suddenly loses all merit.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS IN PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

Peer response groups give writers access to feedback from their peers. Goodacre (1968) and other supporters of peer response groups suggest that this will be a positive experience for them. Goodacre writes: "In some degree the pupil and teacher will share a common culture, but frequently there will be a dramatic divergence -- such as an inner-urban, working-class pupil with parents from overseas, and a university-trained, suburban, middle-class teacher" (p. 63). Goodacre adds to this that the pupil's "writing may be dominated by the sole consideration of meeting minimum requirements" of a class (p. 64). "The act of writing inserts itself into a network of social relations which will make a writer say this rather than that -- in this way rather than that -- or perhaps suppress this and add that" (pp. 58-59). Writing for one person, a teacher, can have a considerable influence on what students choose to write. Goodacre suggests that meeting in groups can help the students to have more motivation to write, since they are writing for their peers instead of a teacher, and to feel more comfortable sharing their writing, since their peers are more apt to come from similar backgrounds. "Change comes over adolescent pupils' writing when it is genuinely directed to a peer audience" (Goodacre, p. 63). He is describing this as a positive change: students who have written to please a teacher beginning to write to please a group, and eventually, to please themselves.

Other supporters of peer response groups, Peterson, Wilkinson, & Hallinan (1984), state that "it will not be a student's absolute achievement-level that determines the assignment, but rather the ability- or achievement-level relative to the students' peers" (p. 95). They caution that grouping does not always make instruction easier and that classroom activities and grouping structures probably "determine the way in which peer influence operates" (p. 49). Peterson et al "suspect that teaching mixed groups can lead to better outcomes" (p. 32).

Teachers need to take care if they mix students of different cultural backgrounds who have held different hierarchical positions in a society (Webb, 1982). The studies Webb draws on show that in such groups in the United States, "white students tend to be more active and influential than minority students" and "minority students tend to be less assertive and more anxious, talk less, and give fewer suggestions and less information than white students" (p. 433). Webb concludes that it is important to consider all agents which influence groups, such as "characteristics of the individual, group, setting, [and] interaction in the group" (p. 441).

Using peer response groups in a Hawaiian reading classroom "increased reading achievement because the participation structures were similar to those of talk story (a rambling personal experience narrative mixed with folk materials), a major speech event in Hawaiian culture" (Au, 1982, p. 91). Whereas Webb (1982) cites situations where peer response groups were not successful because of social factors and students' different cultural backgrounds, Au

states that in this case they were successful because the majority of students were from a "minority culture" in which being singled out in front of a group "violates their cultural norms" (p. 92). Au believes that the social relationships encouraged within the groups and the co-narration that the students did had "cultural congruence" for them and that they were therefore able to improve their reading (p. 94).

To add to this conflicting information about peer response groups in various situations are the characteristics of the groups and individuals in them. George (1984) describes three representative group types that she has observed during two years of using peer response groups in writing classrooms. The "Task-Oriented" group may not consist of strong students, but its strength "lies in [the members'] willingness to talk and listen to each other" (p. 321). The "Leaderless" group is quiet and hesitant, and can be "easily dominated by one member who passes judgment quickly" and "cuts off comments immediately" (p. 321). The "Dysfunctional" group does not form a group, and "accepts any comment as the answer" (p. 321). George states that for the Leaderless and Dysfunctional groups, interaction may "pose a threat" and that they are "suspicious of the value of peer feedback and want the instructor to tell them what should be done" (p. 323).

Through protocols of three different students responding to peer response groups in an English classroom, Berkenkotter (1984) analyzed the reactions of three college freshmen: Stan, Pat and Joann. Stan became hostile and gave his peers aggressive critiques,

and disregarded their advice for him ("None of these assholes are going to agree with me . . . I don't feel the need to rewrite") (pp. 313-314). Pat rewrote his essay in reaction to his peers' advice to add more detail and to "change my whole story around," and after he had rearranged the material he rejected the teacher's suggestion during a second evaluation to reorganize the material, stating that he "wouldn't be able to make entire paragraphs out of what was going on" if he did (p. 316). Berkenkotter concludes that this student's sense of authority over his writing grew from hearing his peers' comments, and that "this commitment brought with it a feeling of responsibility to his text, so strong that he chose to make decisions independent of the readers' expectations" (p. 316).

Joann spent the most time trying to incorporate her peers' responses into her work, so much so that Berkenkotter wrote that she experienced a "crisis of authority" about her own ability to write, as she made changes even when she questioned the authority of her peers' advice (p. 318). Berkenkotter concludes that although "it is true that peers can offer the writer additional perspectives, support, and generally, less threatening feedback than a teacher-evaluator," writers' responses to their peers "hinge on a number of subtle emotional and intellectual factors" (p. 318).

To relate this information to ESOL writing classrooms, Goodacre's note of the differing backgrounds of students and teachers may be appropriate, and could offer support for giving ESOL students access to input from their peers. There is the added complication that ESOL students are writing in an additional

language. Their rhetorical styles may parallel those they use in their first language, not English, and ESOL teachers need to provide students with "writing skills and cultural information that will allow students to perform successfully" in the classes that will follow (Reid, 1989, p. 232). Au stated that peer response groups may be culturally appropriate for groups of students from backgrounds which emphasize communal learning and oral skills. These are characteristics of many cultural groups within and outside of the United States whose members may be in ESOL classes.

Teachers need to consider Webb's caution about forming groups: putting students from different cultural backgrounds into groups, especially if one culture has had a tendency to dominate another, may not necessarily be helpful for all group members. George's description of task-oriented, leaderless and dysfunctional groups demonstrates how groups within one classroom can differ. Berkenkotter's (1984) study analyzing three students shows the differing reactions that students can have to their peers within one class.

There should be no less variation in the different types of groups and in individuals' reactions to them in ESOL classrooms than in English classrooms. Some combinations of students may develop a successful group capable of giving helpful criterion- and reader-based feedback writers; others may not. Some individuals may develop authority over their texts through these groups; others may become angry, or lose confidence. It seems necessary for teachers to keep in mind the cultural, social, group and individual factors that

could affect the individuals and groups in English writing classrooms while using peer response groups in their ESOL writing classrooms.

RESEARCH ON PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

While discussing the theoretical foundations of peer response groups in the writing classroom, DiPardo & Freedman (1988) state that they have "as yet been the subject of only a small body of empirical literature, some . . . constricted by a rather narrow frame of vision" (p. 136). Part of the problem may be determining what to research and how to measure it. Cheatham & Jordan (1979) studied "the influence of peer evaluation on student attitudes and achievement" (p. 174). Students were given attitude surveys and their achievement level was measured through grades. This study resulted in "no significant attitudinal or achievement differences" between the different classes (p. 176).

Freedman (1992) did a qualitative study on two peer response groups in Californian ninth-grade classrooms, characterizing the intended functions of groups, from "outside-in," and characterizing response group talk, from "inside-out" (p. 71). Results from "outside-in" showed that contexts for the response groups generally differed. In one class they followed whole-class lessons whereas in the other class they followed individual conferences. Through interviews, one teacher was found to consider response groups central to her teaching philosophy, whereas the other used them to

insure responses to in-process drafts. One intertwined class activities with those before and after peer response; the other did not. Both teachers used response sheets to guide the groups. Results from the "inside-out" looking at the subject of students' discussions showed that 59% of the interaction in each class was aimed at completing the response sheets. Much of the interaction centered around "avoiding directions to evaluate one another negatively, collaborating to complete the sheets in order to get the work done in ways that would preserve their relationships with their classmates and would satisfy the teacher, and discussing their writing as directed by the sheets" (p. 87).

As a conclusion to this study, Freedman questions whether there are any situations in which students will productively evaluate each other, or if they will generally avoid giving any negative feedback. She also states that in future studies, it is important for observers to pay attention to the age of participants, their preparation for group work, their past experiences and the activities surrounding the peer response groups.

Some teachers and researchers are not convinced that peer response groups can produce greater academic achievement than the competition of working individually. Cavanagh & Styles (1983) documented teachers' frustrations in comments such as "My students think group work is just another opportunity to chat; My students only mark the easy things" (p. 63). Newkirk's (1984) results of comparing student and teacher evaluations were that they "frequently use different criteria . . . in judging student work," and

believes that this information "raises serious questions about the advice given to students to "write for their peers" (p. 309). Graner (1987) cites problems such as "unskilled and uncritical editorial comments, lack of students preparation, and loss of classroom control" (p. 40). "Peer editing," he states, "is nothing more than the blind leading the blind with unskilled editors guiding inexperienced writers in a process neither understands well" (p. 40). He also observes that "students often feel uncomfortable making negative criticisms of peers' work" (p. 40).

Danis (1988) defended the "talking about topics other than our papers" by stating that "there is nothing wrong with unremarkable conversations, they keep communication channels open and help daily life move smoothly" (pp. 356-357). As a solution to too much wasted time she suggests having students write their feedback to each other. This added structure "allows for a cooperative spirit" among the groups but keeps them focused (p. 358). Meyers (1986) writes that "schools not only teach academic knowledge; they teach work according to schedule, acceptance of authority, and competition among individuals and between groups" (p. 156). Peer response groups provide an alternative to accepting the authority of a teacher and to competition among students, especially if teachers do not follow Newkirk's suggestion that students' feedback must conform to their own.

A response to Graner's criticism could be Cavanagh & Styles' (1983) statement that English teachers often have "faulty assumptions . . . that students can be turned loose to evaluate their

own work or that of their peers with little or no preparation" (p. 64).
Bruffee (1984) writes a similar comment: "Organizing collaborative
learning effectively requires doing more than throwing students
together with their peers with little or no guidance or preparation.
To do that is merely to perpetuate, perhaps even aggravate, the many
possible negative effects of peer group influence: conformity, anti-
intellectualism, intimidation, and leveling-down of quality" (p. 652).
Mittan (1989) writes that "peer review must be integrated into the
[ESOL] course" if it is to be successful. He finds that the peer
review process is the best opportunity the students have to use
Britton et al's (1975) category of expressive writing, because it is
closest to and modeled on speech. Peer review gives writers a
comfortable means for discovering their thoughts and feelings
(Mittan, 1989, p. 212).

Theories of cognitive development, particularly Vygotsky's,
and current theories of writing support the use of peer response
groups in ESOL classrooms. Advantages of peer response groups
include treating writing as a process; allowing for two-way
communication between writers and readers; giving writers diverse
and attentive audiences; encouraging writers' confidence; supplying
them with a tool for evaluation of writing; and promoting group
problem solving and collaborative learning. So-called disadvantages
include requiring teachers to relinquish control and authority over
their writing classes, and the necessity that students must give
support and criticism to each other in order for the group to be
helpful. Insensitive or unwilling peers and groups can be a problem,

as well as students who are accustomed to an authoritarian classroom and resent the input of their peers. Research on peer response groups in English and ESOL classrooms indicates that this is a complex activity which guarantees neither success nor failure.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological design used in this study was descriptive. Peer response groups in ESOL writing classrooms were viewed from six perspectives: transcripts of the peer response groups that occurred in the observed ESOL class; information from students in this ESOL class; interviews with three individuals in an ESOL writing class; interviews with the ESOL writing instructor; surveys of the ESOL writing instructor community; and journal entries of a participant in an upper division required writing class whose professor used peer response groups. Information from these six perspectives was obtained through class observations, questionnaires, interviews, transcripts of peer response groups, surveys, and a journal. The following chapter contains precise descriptions concerning the gathering of these data.

STUDENTS IN AN ESOL WRITING CLASSROOM

Subjects

This research was conducted in an advanced academic ESOL writing class at an institution of higher education. An advanced level class was considered necessary to insure that the students would have sufficient speaking and comprehension skills for the planned interviews. An academic class was preferable for these reasons: the students would be doing extensive writing, the class had a definite beginning and end, and attendance was required.

The class I observed met once for fifty minutes every weekday during ten weeks. Eleven students registered for the class: three from Japan, two from the Middle East; and others from areas in Asia and Europe. The class was not unrepresentative of many advanced academic ESOL writing classes in this area. All students agreed to participate in the research project.

Procedures

On the beginning day of class, the instructor introduced me as a linguistics student who would be, with their permission, simultaneously helping the class and doing some research. They accepted. I attended every writing class, and sat among the students, alternating my position daily. Sometimes I participated in the activities with the students, but I spent many of the class periods taking observational notes. I recorded the activities that occurred, student attendance and participation, and the assignments

students were given. Often I would arrive five or ten minutes before the class and interact with the students who were already there. After several weeks, the students were accustomed to having·me with them and began to interact with me as they did with each other, confiding and complaining about the ESOL courses they were taking. Several contacted me when other ESOL instructors asked them to interview or get information from someone whose first language was English. One gave me daily reports of his continuing struggle to bring his wife and children from the country of his birth to the United States. I thus gained entry and rapport with most of the students through my availability, neutrality, and interest in their personal lives.

In my study of the class, I looked at students' attendance, participation, their answers to questionnaires at the beginning and end of class, and holistic evaluations of their writing. I did not include data from the students who did not complete the class.

Observations of Attendance. Student attendance was measured through their physical presence in the classroom. I reported both late entries and absences. This was of interest because the activities that students were or were not present for could have an effect on a student's reaction to the peer response groups.

Observations of Participation. Student participation was measured in the activities in which participation was encouraged. These included open discussions and group/pair activities. Students were at first given numbers B1-9 and later pseudonyms. I tallied students' speech, and counted any type of utterance that appeared

related to an activity as a participation, whether it consisted of a complete sentence, or a noise signaling agreement or disagreement (for example, "Humm."). Two utterances that would be transcribed with a full stop were counted as two participations (for example, "It's a free country. You can practice any religion."). If someone spoke, was answered, and spoke again, this was counted as two participations. Input by the group as a whole was not counted (i.e. laughter, etc.), as it was too difficult to determine which members had participated. Some of the class sessions and all of the peer response groups were audio recorded with small battery-powered recorders. Students became accustomed to having audio recorders in the classroom and stated that they were not bothered by them.

A second party established the interrater reliability of this procedure. This person was trained in the use of the scale, and 100% agreement was reached over ten minutes of data. Although it could be argued that it does not reflect in totality the input of each student, this information was of interest because it was reliable, and could be compared with student participation in peer response groups measured by the same procedure (for an example, see Table I).

Questionnaires. During the first and last week of the class, the students were given in-class questionnaires to elicit statements relevant to the claims and concerns found in literature on peer response groups (see Tables II and III for sample questionnaires).

The first question measured any changes in the students' desire to write over the period of the term. The second measured

TABLE I

EXAMPLE OF PARTICIPATION MEASUREMENT

B5: So what did you say about the animals there?   (1)
B7: Uh, we have cats, and dogs, and monkeys.   (1)
B6: What about religion?   (1)
B7: It's a free country. You can practice any religion.(2)
B8: And you can park anywhere too.   (1)
(general laughter)   (0)
B6: Humm. You said that the people sleep on ice?   (2)

Total Participations: B5: 1   B6: 3   B7: 3   B8: 1

TABLE II

QUESTIONS ON THE BEGINNING AND FINAL STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you like to write in English?
   (circle one)   Very much   6 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all

2. Complete this sentence: I think that I am a _____ writer.
                           (example: excellent, bad, etc)

3. Who do you want to read your writing?
   (√check one box)   ☐ only my teacher
                         ☐ only my friends
                         ☐ my teacher and my friends
                         ☐ anyone who is interested

4. When someone else reads your writing, how do you feel?
                         ☐ happy
                         ☐ afraid
                         ☐ bored
                         ☐ something else? _____

any changes in their self-perceptions as writers of English. The third measured changes in the audience that they desired: multiple readers indicated they wanted a broad audience, and one or two readers indicated they wanted a narrow one. The fourth measured changes in their feelings about sharing their writing with other people. The questions which appeared only on the final questionnaire elicited students' responses to the class and to the peer response groups that they had experienced.

The fifth question focused on the students' desire to work individually and in groups. The sixth asked for their input about reading their writing aloud. The seventh and eighth questions were aimed at their reaction to getting feedback and responding to criticism in the peer response groups. The ninth and tenth questions asked for their response to hearing their peers' writing and responding to it.

Holistic Evaluations of Student Writing. During the ten-week term, the students wrote eight papers more than one page in length, three of which they rewrote, and they also completed ten smaller writing assignments, four of which they wrote with peers. I used these as one source of information for interview questions. At the beginning of the term, the students were asked to write an essay in class with an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion on the topic of: "What advice would you give to a friend coming to the U.S. to study?" At the end of the term, the students were asked to write an essay using the same structure on the topic of: "What advice would you give to someone who plans on visiting your

TABLE III

QUESTIONS ON THE FINAL STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

5. In this class, many of the activities that you did were in groups, like Turpania, reading each other's papers, etc. Did you like working with other students, or would you prefer to work alone?

6. One of the things that you did was to read your own writing out loud to other students. Some people like to do this because they can read things exactly the way they've written them. Other people are embarrassed. What do you think, did you like reading aloud, or is silent better?

7. After you read aloud, the other students made some comments about your writing. Did you like this or not? Why or why not?

8. What did you do when someone said something about your writing that you didn't agree with?

9. You listened to the other students' essays too. Was this a good experience or not? Why or why not?

10. What did you think about giving advice to the other students? Was it easy to find something to say? What did you look for in their writing?

country?" I typed these, leaving off the students' names and the date of composition, and gave them to two ESOL writing instructors to evaluate. The essays were evaluated with an ESL composition profile (Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, & Hughey, 1981) which placed five components of writing on a 100 point scale (see Appendix A). The scores were averaged to give each essay a rating.

If the ratings differed by more than ten points they were given to a third ESOL writing instructor for evaluation and the three scores were averaged as Jacobs et al (1981) indicate. This holistic evaluation was done for the purpose of measuring changes that may have occurred in the students' writing ability (for sample evaluations see Appendix B).

PEER RESPONSE GROUPS IN THE ESOL WRITING CLASSROOM

Procedures

Recording the Groups. During the term, the students met in three separate sessions of peer response groups to discuss writing assignments. The instructor informed me the day before they were to do this activity, and I brought three tape recorders to the classroom. As usual, I entered the instructor's written and oral instructions to the class in my observation notes.

During the first peer response group meetings, I placed a recorder on a chair near each of the three groups, which were in different areas of the classroom. These tapes proved almost completely unintelligible because of the background noise of other groups and because of the distance between them and the students.

For the second and final peer response group sessions, students met in separate classrooms and the recorders were placed in the middle of their groups. Although they were aware of the recorders, as they were often responsible for turning them on and off, the students reported that they were not bothered by their

presence. The students used these nearby classrooms for other group activities as well, so the surroundings were not unfamiliar.

Transcribing the Tapes. After a peer response group had been taped, I would listen to the tape in entirety and then begin to write what had been said. I typed the speech verbatim. I typically began to transcribe as soon as a group had been recorded, but transcribing was a lengthy process. When I could not understand what a student had said, I would write "unintelligible" (see Appendix C for a list of symbols used to transcribe the tapes).

Interpreting the Transcripts. The students' direct speech, recorded on the transcripts, is a valuable source of information about their interaction. To respond to questions concerning the subject and intent of students' interaction while in peer response groups, I developed a tally sheet (shown in Table IV). This tally sheet provides a category for each utterance, and while these categories cannot capture the precise nature of what was said, they can be used to reflect the quantity of a certain type of interaction.

Twice, the instructor had the students engage in editing groups after they had met in the peer response groups. They were given specific checklists with which to proofread and correct their peers' writing. The data from these editing sessions were not tallied, as these groups were not allowed to choose the intention of their interaction nor the aspect of writing they could address.

The first category, Who is speaking, identifies the person who speaks. The choices include students during the period before a writer reads, a student whose writing is being discussed, a student

who is responding to the writing, and the instructor. This category is useful for comparing the amount writers speak to that which readers speak, for determining which students speak when the task is being determined, and for discovering the proportion of input the instructor gives the groups.

The second category, <u>Why are they speaking</u>, was created to characterize the reasons students are speaking. These reasons include reading aloud from the paper, organizing the group, initiating a response to the writing, addressing a previous response as an author or as a reader, and talking about things other than the writing. With data from this category I was able to determine which students were speaking for what reasons, and thereby address the concern documented in Cavanagh & Styles' (1983) research as to the students' use of time in the groups.

The third category focuses on the nature of the students' comments: <u>If the speech is directed at the writing, with what intention</u>. Each comment, if about the writing, is made with an intent, either to change the writing, ask a question about it, respond neutrally about it, or defend and/or support the way in which it has been written. This analysis addresses Freedman's (1992) concerns that criticism is avoided as well as Keh's (1990) concern that too much criticism occurs.

The fourth category is aimed at the <u>area of writing addressed</u>. Because the students' essays were evaluated by Jacobs et al's (1981) ESL composition profile, the same categories were used to determine the direction of their remarks. There is an inherent

TABLE IV

TALLY SHEET FOR QUANTIFYING PEER RESPONSE GROUP INTERACTION

Peer Response Groups: What are they talking about?

1. Who is speaking?	2. Why are they speaking	3. If the speech is directed at the writing, with what intention? (C, D, E only)	4. Area of writing addressed? (C, D, E, only)
I. Student whose writing is being discussed.	A. Reading aloud from paper after first reading	1. goal of response is change ("criticism")	a. Content
			b. Organi- zation
II. Student responding to the writing.	B. Organizing group		c. Vocabu- lary
		2. question	
III. Student during period when reader/ responders are undetermined	C. Responding to writing (initiating a topic)	3. response is neutral	d. Language Use
			e. Mechanics
IV. Instructor	D. Responding to discussion of OWN writing	4. response defends or supports what is written	
	E. Responding to discussion of PEER'S writing		
	F. Communication not directly related to writing		

conflict with using this type of scale to measure comments in peer response groups, in which, if organized as Elbow (1981) proposes, peers should try to give writers both criterion-based or "what is its quality" feedback, "the kind most people are accustomed to -- what they've usually gotten from teacher -- ," and reader-based or "how does it work" feedback, "one of the main advantages and pleasures of the whole process" (pp. 241-245). I chose to use the adaptation from Jacobs et al (1981) in order to be able to address the comments documented in Cavanagh & Styles (1983) concerning students' preoccupation with mechanics and "the easy things," and to document what aspects of composition the group of ESOL students paid most attention to (p. 63).

The interactions were not counted when the meaning of a statement was not readily apparent, where a statement was left unfinished, was unintelligible, or consisted of a sound (i.e. laughter, etc). I considered the interaction that occurred after one paper was read independently from that of the next, as in each case the roles of students sharing writing and students responding to writing were switched. The transcripts were tallied, and then a second copy was tallied for a comparison. When there was a discrepancy, I referred to the criteria established for a final decision. A second party was trained in the use of the tally sheet. Ten minutes of data, which contained sixty-four coded interactions, were tallied. Agreement on sixty two of the interactions or 96.7% agreement was reached to determine interrater reliability (see Appendix D). Table V gives an example of an interpreted transcript.

Creating Profiles of Groups and Students
from the Interpretation of Transcripts

The tally sheet provided data for interpreting the interaction of each group and each individual responding to each paper. One reason for tallying information was to have a less subjective manner of discussing student interaction in the peer response groups than the uninterpreted transcripts, and another was to compare these students with those described in the research on types of peer response groups (George, 1984) and on the behavior of individuals while in these groups (Berkenkotter, 1984).

Profiles of groups. Profiles of groups in the roles of sharing their writing and responding to peers' writing were created through graphs of these data. Graphs were created to demonstrate the intentions of writers' and responders' interaction with one another in groups. Students who were reading their writing were labeled "Sharers;" students who were responding to this writing were labeled "Responders." In the interest of simpler figures, data from the groups during periods where sharers and responders were not defined (students labeled III in the category Who is speaking) were not included. The intention of students' interaction was divided into the following categories:

    Cr: expressing intent to change writing or criticism of writing
    Qu: question about writing
    Nu: neutral comment about writing
    S/D: support or defense of what is written
    N/R: interaction not related to writing.

TABLE V

TRANSCRIPT INTERPRETED WITH TALLY SHEET

<u>Tallied Utterance</u>   <u>Transcript</u>

II.C.4.a   B5: <u>I think that your introduction is good.</u>
  (Reader initiates
  support of content)

II.C.4.a   B6: <u>But it made me a little scared,</u> because of
  (Reader initiates)   mosquito!
  simultaneous
  support of content)

(no count)   (general laughter)

II.E.1.a   B5: I agree, about, about the clothes, here.
  (Reader responds   But, for mosquito, I mean, there's not really
  with desire to   important advice. There are more other
  change content)   important advices.

(no count)   B6: Oh.

II.E.4.a   B7: Iiiii think it's important. It's important.
  (Reader responds in   To me, plus, uh-
  support of content)

II.E.1.a   B5: But I'm thinking, I don't go to America
  (Reader responds   and think about the bugs, you know! No. If
  with desire to   it's about the mosquito or what. I mean it
  change content)   doesn't really concern me. Even, unless you
     go to a jungle, if you're planning to go to
     Amazon, where there's malaria, you know,
     then I'll think but you're going to a place, a
     country of Thailand. Yeah that's not <u>really-</u>

II.F   (Reader's   B7: <u>Yeah</u> but anyway I think, the mosquito is
  remark not directly   important in life, because-
  related to writing)

(no count)   B5: (laughs)

II.E.4.a   B7:-for example, in my family, when, in the
  (Reader responds   night, we have a mosquito in the room,
  in support of   bedroom, we cannot sleep. All time this
  content)   zzzzz! Yeah-cannot sleep. Yeah, I think it's a
     good advice. Be careful, if you go there,
     about mosquito.

(no count)   B6: (laughs) Ok!

Because they aim to give a profile of a particular group, these graphs do not show the quantity of interaction belonging to each individual. They give a profile of the type of interaction that .. occurred in the peer response groups. These group profiles are supplemented with a description of the interaction that transpired between students as they discussed their writing. These descriptions were obtained from the audio recordings. A profile exists of each group that was successfully audio recorded.

Profiles of peers. Profiles of peers in the role of sharing their writing and responding to peers' writing were also created through graphs of these data. Figures, modeled on Kohl's (1987) discussion of Kluckhohn's model for comparing and contrasting cultures, show the areas of writing that students in peer response groups addressed as writers and as responders when they specifically discussed their writing, and the intentions with which they addressed them. The intentions are stated above (Cr, Qu, Nu, S/D), the areas of writing addressed are C: content; O: organization; V: vocabulary; L: language use; and M: mechanics. Whether the students initiated, responded to, or both initiated and responded to these areas of writing is also specified. The intentions that students expressed in groups were interpreted to create a profile of these individuals as writers and responders in peer response groups. The figures are supplemented with descriptions of these students sharing and responding to writing in the groups, and the percentages of interaction they devoted to each of the five skill areas are given also.

To give a clearer picture of the students, the figures were made of individuals participating in the second session of peer response groups. They were made of students sharing one piece of writing with a group, and responding to one piece of writing within a group. In the case that it was necessary to choose between a student's response to several different peers, an attempt was made to show the student in a situation that would focus on as many of the different students and groups as possible.

These profiles are not able to portray the chronological order in which students addressed areas of writing, but they do demonstrate which areas of writing received what type of attention from sharers and responders.

Other Data Measured. Other aspects of students' interaction that the tally sheet made measurable were listed. These included the amount students read aloud from the writing apart from the reading that they did to share their papers; comments that they made to organize the peer response groups; and the percentage of participation of individuals in comparison to other group members. Data concerning reading aloud and organizing were recorded in the form of the times this occurred per session and compared among students. Participation was also compared among students. If in a given session, B1, B5 and B8 had participation counts of five, sixteen and twenty-nine, it would be averaged to determine that B1 had done 10%, B5 32%, and B8 58% of the talking in that particular group. Data were averaged for the participation in discussions of each essay in each peer response session. These data were used to

compare students' participation in various peer response group situations as well as to compare their participation in peer response groups with their participation in open class discussions and other group activities.

<u>Examining the Effect of Peer Feedback on Second Drafts of Writing.</u> Pre- and post- peer response group writing was collected, and the changes that students had made were compared with the advice that they had received to compare what effect their peers' feedback had had on their revisions.

THREE INDIVIDUALS IN AN ESOL WRITING CLASS

Subjects

For this part of the study, I chose three students among the class who appeared to be at different stages in the process of learning to write in English and who were from different ethnic backgrounds and of different genders. My goal in seeking this diversity was to obtain in-depth opinions of peer response groups from different sources. The students I chose, Hamoodei, Eri, and Dao (pseudonyms), are somewhat representative of typical international students in western Oregon, yet it must be remembered that all people are to some degree exceptions to a prototypical individual from their culture, and that people who travel outside their culture are more apt to be less prototypical than those who do not (Bennett, 1990; Condon & Yousef, 1975). For these reasons it seems more prudent not to perceive these students' experiences as any type of

norm, but rather as groundwork on which to base further inquiries.
My goal was to create an accurate picture of these people and their
reactions to peer response groups in this situation as individuals,
not as students nor as cultural representatives.

Procedures

The instructor helped me to identify which students might be
of low, average and high writing ability after they had written their
introductory essay. It was also important to choose the students
who appeared to have the intention of attending regularly and of
completing the course for the interviews to be meaningful. During
the first week, I observed the students as a group, and chose three
who were diverse but who fulfilled the above specifications. I
approached each of the three students after class during the second
week, and explained my research and the interviews it would entail.
These students agreed to participate in my study.

In the latter part of the second week, I interviewed each of
these students for the first time. These interviews were conducted
in a private location. My goal for the beginning interview was to
learn as much as possible about these students as individuals, as
writers, and as members of this class without intimidating or
annoying them with a barrage of personal questions that I had not
earned the right to ask. I prepared myself by reading about the three
countries they were raised in, and bringing a map of the geographic
area of their birth to the interview. Identification of their
hometowns led into a description of their families, and from there I

was able to ask about their early schooling and experiences with English. The topic of English brought the conversation back to their reason for being in this particular class, their approach to writing, and their thoughts about sharing their writing. I had decided that tape recording the students ran too great a risk of making them feel uncomfortable. I followed an outline of questions and took brief notes during the interview which I filled in with details soon after the interview was finished.

I interviewed the three students for a second time during the fifth week of class. The focus of this interview was their initial impression of the peer response groups that they had participated in. I elicited their opinions by showing them copies of the writing they had responded to while asking them about what they had said, for what reasons, and why it had had the effect that it did on their writing. I also quoted from the transcripts of the respective groups that they had participated in, and asked them about their reactions to the comments of group members. Again during this interview, I followed an outline of questions and took brief notes during the interview which I filled in with details soon after the interview was finished.

The third interview took place during the last week of classes. My goal was to have these individuals summarize what the peer response group experience had been for them, to make comments about how they would change it if they could, and to react to the writing class while being able to see it all clearly behind them. I again showed them copies of writing that they had written and

reacted to, and read aloud from the transcripts and from my observation notes to elicit their opinions about different experiences in the class and in peer response groups. I also asked them to choose appropriate pseudonyms for themselves. Because all of the students had become accustomed to being recorded while they spoke, and because these three students seemed comfortable with me as an interviewer by this time, I followed an outline of questions but recorded this final interview and transcribed it (sample interview transcript found in Appendix C). All interviews were conducted outside or in vacant rooms where the discussion was not overheard.

AN ESOL WRITING INSTRUCTOR'S APPROACH, DESIGN, AND PROCEDURE

Subject

The fourth perspective of peer response groups was obtained from the ESOL writing course's instructor. It was assumed that the instructor's approach to teaching, the design of his course, and the procedures he followed in the classroom would play a role in the students' reactions to experiences in class. It was important to find an instructor who not only had experience with this activity and believed that it was useful in the ESOL classroom, but who also found that peer response groups fit into a paradigm of teaching writing. The ESOL writing instructor had been teaching at the university level for over seven years, and used peer response groups regularly because they were complimentary to his approach to

teaching writing. He agreed to be interviewed while I was observing his writing classroom during the term.

Procedures

Interviews. I interviewed the ESOL instructor, Kurt (a pseudonym), at the beginning and end of his class. The beginning interview focused on Kurt's approach to teaching writing and reasons behind using peer response groups in ESOL classrooms, and the design he uses for his class. This one-hour interview was given during the first week of class. I followed an outline of questions, but when new questions arose during the interview I added them. I took notes as he spoke, and filled in details directly following the interview. The second and final interview, which also lasted about one hour, took place the week after the class had ended. Prepared questions for this interview elicited reflective and conclusive statements about the peer response group sessions and students and activities in this particular class, although again I added a few questions as the interview proceeded. This interview was taped and transcribed (sample interview transcript found in Appendix D).

Observations. As mentioned above, I observed Kurt's ESOL writing class every day and kept detailed notes as to the activities facilitated, lectures given, and any aspects of his behavior in class that appeared relevant to the peer response groups. I observed this class for a total of forty-seven lessons, thirty-seven of which were taught by this instructor, two by a substitute, and eight by a teaching assistant. Aspects that appeared relevant to the peer

response groups included: the roles students were expected to hold in the class; the amount of time they were given to interact; the "kind" of instructor Kurt was (i.e. formal-informal; objective-, subjective, etc); and the manner in which he evaluated writing.

THE ESOL WRITING INSTRUCTOR COMMUNITY

Subjects

It was important to compare information obtained from one ESOL writing instructor with information from instructors in similar positions. My target group was academic ESOL writing instructors. An "academic" class was defined as one whose goal was to prepare students for study in higher education, in this case, a writing class for ESOL students for this purpose. I contacted ESOL programs that were in the same geographic area as the instructor I observed.

Procedures

During the term, I posted 120 surveys to ESOL writing instructors in twelve academic ESOL programs. The survey contained ten major questions, each eliciting information relating to the use of peer response groups in ESOL classrooms (see table VI for sample questions).

The first and second questions were aimed at learning how much experience the ESOL writing instructors had had in their fields, and whether this had any relationship with their answers to

other questions. The third question was to identify the ESOL student population that the instructors were teaching. Questions four, five, and six were to elicit whether the instructors knew of peer response groups, whether they had used them in their writing classes, when and where they may have learned of this procedure, and if they used such groups regularly.

Question seven focused on the purposes that the instructors had when they used peer response groups. Of interest here was how many of them used these groups for purposes of writing (i.e. content and form) and how many used them for interactive purposes (i.e. sharing information, furthering student relationships), and what other reasons would be given.

Question eight was asked in order to obtain a comparison with Elbow's (1981) prototypical group which read aloud, and brought copies of their writing for other members, with Hairston's (1982) support of writing multiple drafts as part of the process of writing, with Zamel's (1985) and Chapin's (1988) suggestions that oral conferences may be superior to written comments, and for the purpose of learning whether the peer response groups were writing for their peers or for an eventual evaluation by an authoritative figure.

The ninth question asked for a yes or no answer concerning the value of these groups. Of special interest were the comments supporting and criticizing its use. These were to be compared with the support and criticism discussed in the research on peer response groups (Cavanagh & Styles, 1983; Rothschild & Klingenberg, 1990;

TABLE VI

SURVEY SENT TO THE ESOL WRITING INSTRUCTOR COMMUNITY

---

1. How many years have you taught ESOL? _____
2. How many years have you taught ESOL writing classes?_____
3. Please identify a typical writing student of yours (age, level. . .):
4. Have you heard of peer evaluation (also known as peer critiquing; peer response groups, feedback groups) before?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

   If yes, when_____ and where?_____

5. Have you ever used this technique in an ESOL writing class as a teacher?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
6. Do you use it on a regular basis?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
7. If you use it, what are your goals when you have peer evaluation in the ESOL classroom? [check appropriate box(es)]

   ☐ to improve content of writing
   ☐ to improve form, content, all aspects of writing
   ☐ to facilitate communication between the students
   ☐ other_____

8. If you use peer evaluation, do you

   -have the students read their writing   ☐ aloud or ☐ silently?
   -have them bring copies of their papers for the group?
       ☐ yes   ☐ no
   -have them write   ☐ multiple drafts or ☐ one draft?
   -have oral conferences with the students? ☐ no   ☐ yes
   -make the final evaluations of papers? ☐ yes   ☐ no

9. If you have tried peer evaluation, did you find it a useful method for teaching ESOL writing classes?

   ☐ No   ☐ Yes   ☐ Not Sure

   If you want to answer, why or why not?_____

10. Have you participated in such a writing response group as a non-teacher?_____

Webb, 1982). The final question was to determine if any instructors

had participated, as was done in this study, as a peer in a response

group, and if so, if there was any relationship between the likelihood of these instructors to use peer response groups in ESOL classrooms when compared with those who had not.

WRITING, SHARING AND RESPONDING THROUGH A PARTICIPANT'S EYES

Procedures

I enrolled in an upper division required writing class, and on the first day of class the instructor had us self-select into groups. Each group had five or six members. These groups met during two of the three class sessions every week, and all members were asked to bring something they had written to each meeting. We were to read our writing aloud, and then give each other criterion-based and reader-based feedback. We were asked to write five journal entries in reaction either to Elbow (1981) or to something concerned with writing at some point during the term, entitled "Monday Journals." We had two "read-arounds," where the entire class met and each person read something s/he had written. Twice during the term we were also asked to turn in a port-folio of several pieces we had shared with our group.

While I participated in this class, I kept a journal of my experiences with and feelings about the peer response groups, and I had frequent private conversations with the instructor during his office hours. I also kept a log of class lectures, discussions and activities. I made these entries either during the class or within twenty-four hours of each response group meeting. These journal

entries, class notes, Monday journals written for the class and my writing became data for this part of the study (see Appendices G and H for sample journal entires and writing).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, the results of the study of peer response groups are given from six perspectives: transcripts of the peer response groups that occurred in the observed ESOL class, information from students in this ESOL class, interviews with three individuals in an ESOL writing class, interviews with the ESOL writing instructor, surveys of the ESOL writing instructor community, and journal entries of a participant in an upper division required writing class whose professor used peer response groups.

PEER RESPONSE GROUPS IN THE ESOL WRITING CLASSROOM

Setting the Scene: Description of the Class

Of the eleven who began, nine international ESOL students attended the advanced writing class from beginning to end. They were representative of the ESOL population at this institution. There were four females and five males. Three students were from Japan, two were from the Middle East, and one each from China, Indonesia, Thailand, and Romania.

The first peer response groups took place during the third week of this eleven week term, on the eleventh day of the term.

Group activities had been part of four of the previous class meetings. On the second day of class, the students had met in small groups and told "two truths and a lie" about themselves, while others in their groups tried to guess which was which. They had met in groups on the fourth and sixth days of class to discuss the short stories they had read for the class, and they had participated in a brainstorming activity in groups on the eighth day.

On the tenth day of class, they were asked to write an essay with an introduction, three paragraphs, and conclusion. The topic was, "What advice would you give a friend coming to the U.S. to study?" The following day of class, after a short discussion of the novel the class was reading, the instructor, Kurt (a pseudonym, as are all names in this study) wrote five sentences on the board: 1) Evaluate the beginning. Does it make you want to read more? 2) Think about the content. Does it seem complete? Did it answer the question? Is there superfluous writing in it? 3) Are there any logical fallacies? 4) Evaluate the ending. Is it effective? 5) Overall, what did you like? What did you dislike? He then assigned the students present to one group of three and two pairs.

Students spent thirty-one minutes reading each other's papers silently, and then responding to the questions that Kurt had written on the board. They were told to rewrite their papers for the next day of class and to include the changes that their peers had suggested. On the twelfth day of class, students were put into pairs, told to exchange papers and edit for grammar and spelling problems. They did this for thirty minutes; then Kurt collected their second drafts

with the editing changes included. He used symbols for evaluating student writing (- means "I didn't like it;" √ means "okay;" + means "I liked it" and ++ means "I loved it"). The nine essays all received a "+." The audio recordings for the first peer response groups on the eleventh day of class were found to be completely unintelligible and yielded no data for this study.

The second session of peer response groups was held during the sixth week of class. Between the third and sixth week, the students were often organized into groups or pairs in the writing class. For three days during the fourth week, they did a group activity called "Turpania." They were divided into diplomats and reporters, and the reporters interviewed the diplomats about their fictitious country, Turpania, first individually and then in a group. During the fifth week, they were twice put into groups to discuss their reading, and they also played a vocabulary game in pairs.

At the beginning of the sixth week, each student was assigned three universities and sent to the library to find information about them. Individuals then spent two days presenting their information to the group. On the next day, the twenty-eighth day of class, students brought three copies of the first draft they had been asked to write outside of class for the assignment: "Write a short essay about which university you'd like to go to." Kurt wrote four questions on the board: 1) What parts do you like/dislike? 2) Does the essay accomplish its purpose? 3) Is it convincing? 4) Does anything interfere with the message? and he advised the students "If

you say it's great, you won't be helping the other students, but say it along parameters."

Kurt divided the seven students who were present into two groups, one of four and one of three. He told the students to listen while their peers read their essays aloud, and then to answer the questions.

Group 1

The students who met in this group were: Ling (Chinese female), Wendi (Indonesian male), and Sidik (Saudi Arabian male). Sidik was twenty and Ling and Wendi were in their mid-twenties. This group met in a classroom separate from where the class was normally held. No one else was present in the room, and they sat at a large table.

Wendi passed out copies of his paper, and the others followed. On seeing Wendi's paper, Sidik remarked: "Wow, you wrote a lot, I didn't write so much." Looking at Sidik's, Wendi said "One page, only one?" After a moment's silence, Sidik said "Hey why don't I just read mine, and then you guys . . . " He read aloud his one paragraph essay in which he had gave personal reasons for choosing a school. No information from his library research was included in his first draft.

Wendi asked why he had not given the tuition of the school in concern, and Sidik explained that tuition did not affect him. Sidik wanted to study at the Colorado School of Mines, and when Wendi asked him about his reasons, Sidik explained that it was because of

the attention he would get there and the beautiful environment, as he had written. Sidik added that he had a friend at that school, and compared Colorado with California, which he found boring. Ling injected that she loved California. These two discussed the virtues of California and Colorado, with Sidik often breaking into Ling's comments with his own longer ones. Then Sidik asked: "Do you guys have any comments for my paper, besides it's too short, huh?" Wendi told him that it was not too comprehensive. Sidik raised his voice and reiterated the previous reasons he gave for choosing the school, adding that tuition might be personal, and that he used to go to a school which cost twenty-five thousand dollars per year. Wendi laughed. Sidik added that when he would pay himself he would go to a cheaper school. Ling laughed. Sidik said: "Now where are we," and Ling began to read her essay.

During the ten minute discussion of Sidik's paper, when measured by the participation measurement (example in Chapter III, table I), Sidik had contributed to 65%, Wendi 20%, and Ling 15% of the interaction.

Ling read aloud her four paragraph essay which contained information from her research and a statement about wanting to study with the "Greeks" at Bucknell University because she was interested in modern Greece. Sidik complimented her on her description, but did not like the way she was "writing about experience" when her information was really "from the books," and that he was not sure about "the, you know, the economics" which she had written she wanted to study. Ling replied that she had taken an

economics class and loved it. There was a minute's silence. Sidik began to criticize foreign students who "think they come to foreign schools to study." He described studying in Florida the year before. Sidik suggested Wendi begin with his essay, but at this point Kurt opened the door and told them to do Wendi's paper the following day. Sidik asked Kurt if he could add to his paper, "because they made me feel bad, you know, they were describing more than me." Wendi told him not to feel bad, and Kurt echoed this. Kurt explained that he was asking them to criticize each other's writing "so that you can make it better later."

During the five minute discussion of Ling's paper, Ling had contributed to 48% of the participation, Sidik 52%, and Wendi 0%.

Figures 1-6 show profiles of the amount of criticizing, questioning, responding neutrally, support and/or defense, and interaction not directly related to the writing that the sharers of the writing and the responders to the writing have done in each group. These are group profiles. Figure 1 presents a profile of Group 1's interaction in a fifteen-minute period when divided into the number of remarks made which criticized (Cr), questioned (Qu), responded neutrally (Nu) or supported/defended (S/D) the writing, as well as the number of remarks made not directly related to the writing (N/R). The white bars represent the interaction of the student(s) who read their writing to the group, and the black bars represent the interaction of the students who responded to their writing. Names of students who shared writing are given in italics.
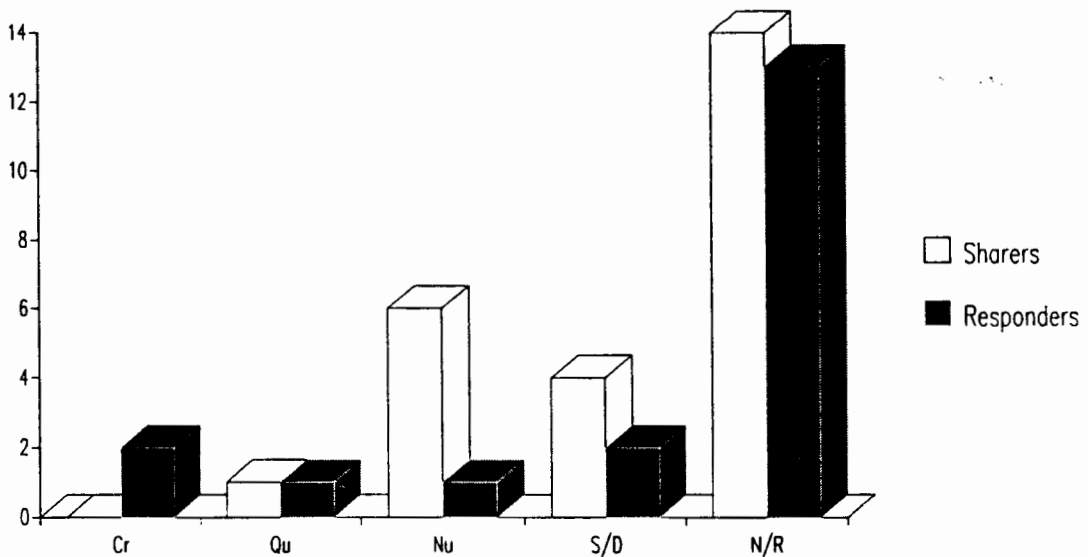
Figure 1. Group 1: (*Sidik*, *Ling*, Wendi), fifteen minutes.

Group 2

The students who met in this group were: Eri (Japanese female), Dao (Thai female), Nicolae (Romanian male) and Hamoodei (Palestinian male). Eri and Hamoodei were close to twenty years old, Dao was in her mid-twenties and Nicolae was in his late thirties. This group sat in a circle in the classroom where the students' class was normally held, and Kurt sat at the opposite side of the room reading papers. By chance, three members of this group were the individuals selected for interviews in the third section of this study.

The students exchanged papers. Eri suggested to Nicolae that he begin, and he answered, "ME?" Dao asked the group: "Everyone is

just going, or . . . ". Nicolae answered: "He said, one of them read and
the other -- " and Hamoodei finished, " -- Yeah, listen." Nicolae read
aloud his essay, which contained eight short paragraphs and included
a lot of information from his research. When he finished, Dao
complimented him, saying his writing "has the point and it is true."
Nicolae agreed that it was true. Eri asked him why his introduction
was divided into two paragraphs. When he did not understand the
question immediately, Dao asked him why he did not combine the
first paragraphs. Nicolae paraphrased her question, "Your
observation is, for the introduction only one paragraph?" Dao began
a new topic, pointing out that Nicolae gave "several major reasons in
his essay, like tuitions and fees." At this point Kurt broke in to ask
how many essays they had finished, and Nicolae told him "one."
Nicolae then asked the group members, "But, what do you don't like?
Uh, what do you dislike? I want to improve my reading and my
writing." Dao asked him if one division was a new paragraph. He
replied that it was not.

There was a pause; then Nicolae remembered some statistics
he had forgotten to include. Hamoodei told him that the essay was
fine as it was. Eri noted Nicolae wrote that students on campus
"have a very nice social life," but did not specify why. Nicolae read
from his essay, "they can enjoy by musics, museum and plenty
sports" from the essay. Eri asked why he said specifically the
students on campus. Nicolae replied, "because of the social life."
There was a pause.

Nicolae asked the others, "Did I convince you to go to Rice University?" Dao replied that he did, because of all the statistics. Nicolae added that the tuition at this school was very high; but that it was a good school because students had both practice and theory. Kurt broke in with, "You sound like Hegel and Marx." Nicolae groaned loudly, "Please, I don't like Marx!" Dao asked Nicolae if this idea of theory and practice were the core of the essay, and he replied affirmatively. Dao then suggested that he should put this in the topic sentence. Nicolae responded that he was not sure if this was necessary, and then turned to Eri and asked, "Did you have some suggestions for me?" Eri said she did not know.

Dao drew Nicolae's attention to the wording of one sentence, and suggested that he write "from my experience" instead of "knowing from my experience," and stated that this interfered with the message "just a little bit." Dao suggested that "I choose" should read "I chose. Nicolae underlined it. Dao added, "It's convincing," and Nicolae laughed, and told her she would come with him. Eri then commented that she had also chosen Rice University, but had obtained different statistics. Eri and Nicolae discovered that their information had come from books of different years, and she commented on the differences in tuition for international students. Dao suggested that "another reason I chose" should become "for choosing," but Nicolae told her it seemed all right to him as it was. Dao told him that his "even though" should be followed with something bad, but Nicolae said, "Awwwo," and the group members laughed. The group concluded its meeting.

During the twenty minute discussion of Nicolae's paper, Nicolae had contributed to 57% of the participation, Hamoodei 7%, Dao 49%, and Eri 8%. Figure 2 presents a profile of Group 2's interaction in a twenty-minute period.

Figure 2. Group 2: (*Nicolae*, Dao, Eri, Hamoodei), twenty minutes.

The second session of peer response groups continued on the thirtieth day of class during the seventh week. Kurt told the students to get into the groups from the previous class, and to continue discussing their papers. Wendi from the former Group 1 had not brought a first draft, so this group did not discuss any writing. Peer response group data for these meetings exist from the students who were formerly Group 2 and became Group 3.

Group 3

The students who met in this group were identical to those in Group 2: Eri (Japanese female), Dao (Thai female), Nicolae (Romanian male) and Hamoodei (Palestinian male). They sat in a circle in the classroom that they used for class, and Kurt sat at the opposite side of the room reading papers. Kurt had rewritten on the board the questions that students were to respond to the previous day.

Eri quietly read aloud her essay of six short paragraphs which included information from the research she had done. Dao began by stating that she liked the introduction, and disliked the conclusion. Eri replied tensely, "You know they always say, write, rewrite everything." Dao commented that she had added information about Rice University in the conclusion that was not in the introduction. After a silence, Dao then said, "I like the way you write, simple, and clear." She pointed out a place where Eri had used the same words several times, but Eri replied she thought that was all right. Nicolae suggested that Eri give more specific information. Dao commented that she had not done this either. Dao stated that the essay was convincing. Hamoodei asked if Rice were a private university, and said that it had to be expensive. Eri was silent. Nicolae said, "Okay, let's go," and the group moved on to Dao's paper.

During the ten-minute discussion of Eri's paper, Eri had contributed to 18%, Dao 50%, Nicolae 25%, and Hamoodei 7% of the interaction.

Dao read aloud her essay of six short paragraphs written from a mostly personal standpoint which included less information from the research than Nicolae's and Eri's papers had. As she had written that she wanted to study at Mt. Vernon because it was a women's college, Nicolae made the first comment, " . . . it's dangerous to study only among the female. You will be prepared only in one way." Dao told the group that she came from a family of females, and Eri asked her more about her family. Hamoodei repeated three times that it was "a very nice essay," and that Dao had "a nice topic." Nicolae told Dao that this college was probably expensive, and then asked if she were sure that the teachers were not only males. She laughed. Dao remarked that her essay was more personal than Nicolae's, and that his had been "more scholaristic." Hamoodei commented that he also had not included many facts, because it was the first draft. Kurt broke in to tell the group to finish at a certain time. Nicolae told Dao that he was not convinced to attend Mt. Vernon, and the group laughed. Eri said this was because everyone had different majors. Hamoodei suggested that Dao add more details about the school, since she had plenty about her feelings. Dao reiterated his advice, "I should add more numbers?" She then suggested her essay was different because she had missed the class when it was assigned. Eri asked why, when all schools had liberal arts, Dao had chosen this one. Dao replied laughing, "Because of the second paragraph," in which she explained that she wanted to study at a women's college. Hamoodei told Dao to "tell how life is gonna

be with school friends," and when she agreed he signaled to the others the meeting was over with a "Let's go."

During the twenty minute discussion of Dao's paper, Dao had contributed to 27%, Eri 5%, Nicolae 36%, and Hamoodei 32% of the interaction. Figure 3 presents a profile of Group 3's interaction in thirty minutes.
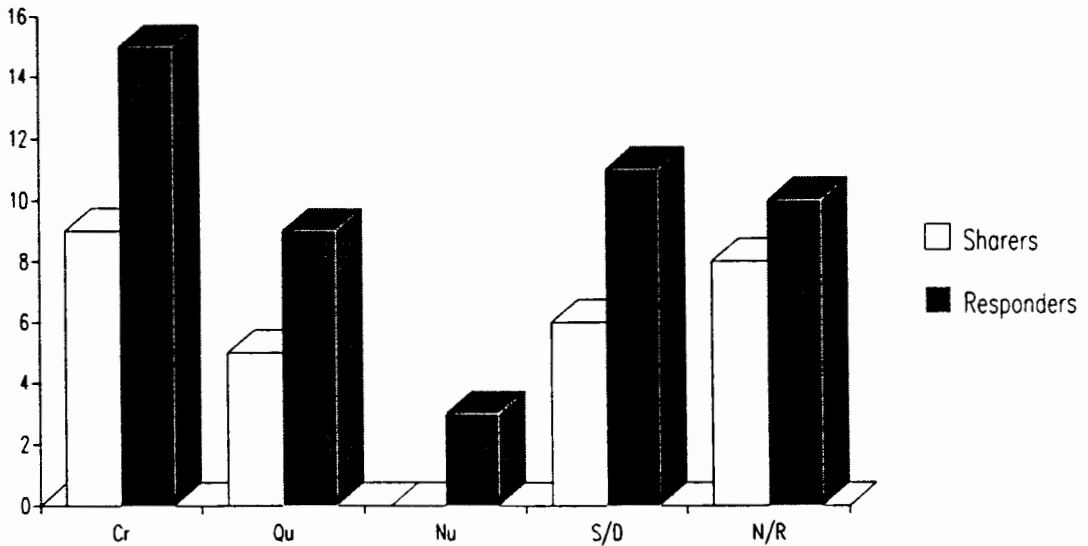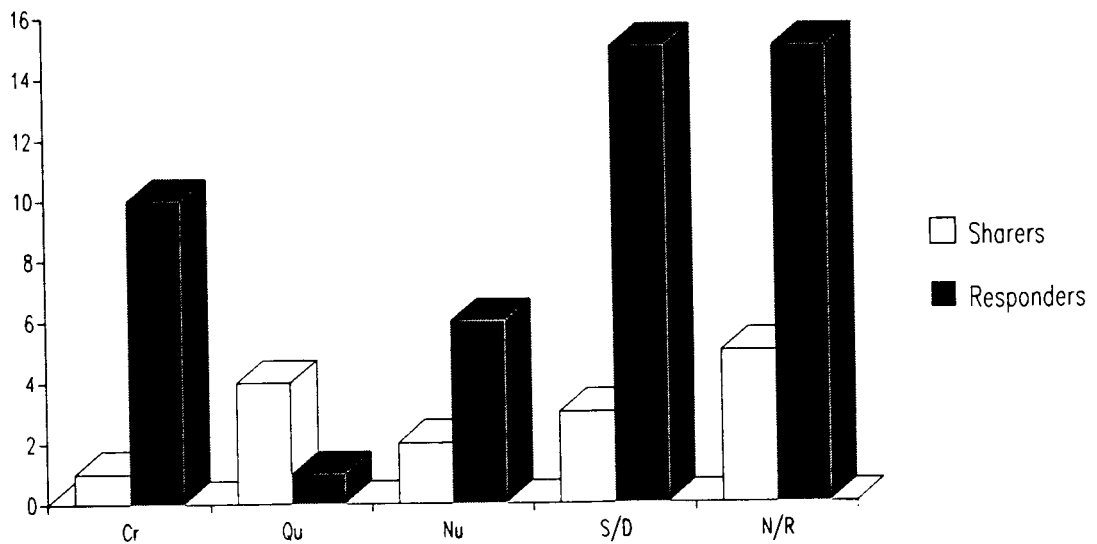

Figure 3. Group 3: (*Eri, Dao,* Nicolae, Hamoodei), thirty minutes.

The second session of peer response groups continued on the thirty-first day of class. Kurt told the students to get into their groups and finish discussing their papers. Twenty minutes into the meetings, he moved one student into another group so that both groups would have enough writing to discuss.

Group 4

The students who met in this group were identical to those in Group 3 with one exception: Eri was absent, and Yasu, a Japanese male in his mid-twenties, took her place. Yasu, Dao, Nicolae and Hamoodei sat in a circle in the classroom used for class, and Kurt sat at the opposite side of the room reading papers. The questions they were to respond to had again been rewritten on the board.

Nicolae said, "Let's go," and Dao asked, "Which one? Hamoodei?" Nicolae repeated, "Hamoodei," and Hamoodei began to read. Hamoodei's essay was three paragraphs long and contained some information from the library research.

Hamoodei reached the second paragraph of his essay, and read, " . . . it's important," and hesitated. Dao read from his essay, "to choose," and Hamoodei repeated "to choose," and continued reading. A few sentences further, he read, "I wasn't completely satisfied . . . because I wasn't," and he paused again. Dao said, "I am not able," and Hamoodei replied, "Yeah, I know." Everyone laughed. Hamoodei continued, "I'm not able to find . . . "

When he finished, Nicolae told him that it was "ok," but that he did not understand the introduction that well. Hamoodei explained that with "universities are the main factor in education" he had meant that they were "higher education than the college," and he suggested that the sentence might need a comma. Nicolae agreed. Nicolae suggested that he add more detail about Kent State University, perhaps the tuition. Hamoodei said that it was too expensive, and he had not wanted to write it down. Nicolae told him

that it was ok to do so. Nicolae drew Hamoodei's attention to a sentence he did not understand, and after discussing it for one minute Hamoodei asked Kurt, "Can I write like this?" Kurt spoke the sentence aloud, changing the word order and suggesting spelling improvements. Hamoodei thanked him. Nicolae summarized, "My observation in your introduction is to give more details, about tuition, and the last one, "finally," could be in addition, because "finally" sounds like a conclusion." Dao spoke for the first time, disagreeing that "finally" needed to be changed. Nicolae replied that it was possible, and that this was only his opinion. Dao added that she liked the ideas but that the writing style was confusing. Hamoodei explained that this was the first draft, and that when he began to write he had to continue without "watching those things" because if not, he would forget everything. "The second draft should be different," and Nicolae agreed. During this group meeting, Yasu had been listening and watching but had not contributed any comments.

During the twenty-minute discussion of Hamoodei's paper, Hamoodei had contributed to 48%, Dao 8%, Nicolae 47%, and Yasu 0% of the interaction. Figure 4 presents a profile of Group 4's interaction in twenty minutes.

Group 5

This group was formed from the students who had been in Group 1. Ling was absent, but the other two members, Wendi and Sidik, were present. Also present were Kazuko, a Japanese female in
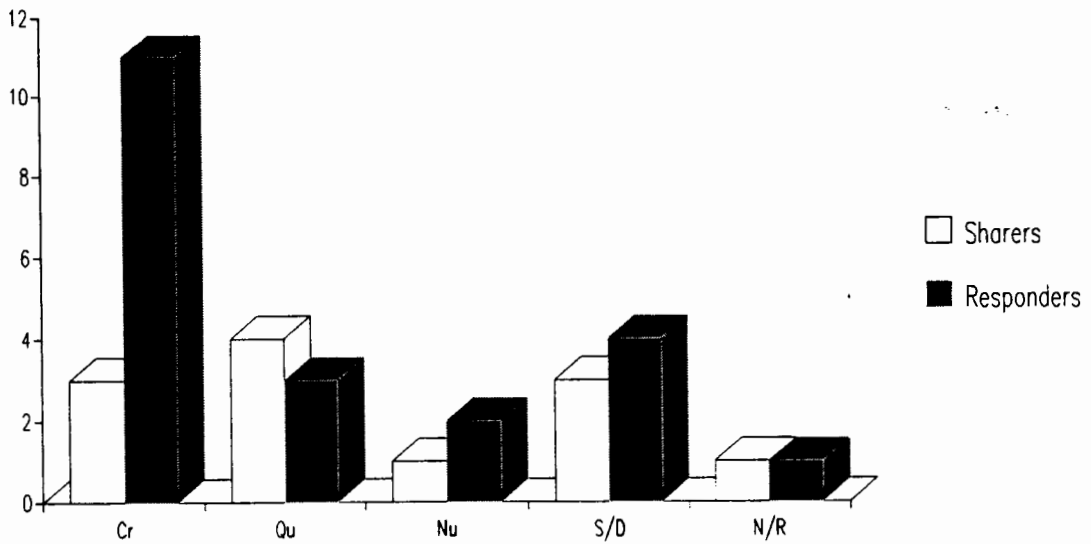
Figure 4. Group 4: (*Hamoodei*, Dao, Eri, Nicolae), twenty minutes.

her early twenties, and Yasu, a Japanese male in his mid-twenties, who joined the group after they had begun. These students met in a unfamiliar room No one else was present in the room. The questions they were to respond to had been written on the board of their classroom before they had left.

Sidik told Kazuko, "It's good you showed up today," and Wendi told her, "You have to read." Kazuko read aloud her four short paragraphs which contained some information from the library research. When she finished, Sidik asked her if she had enough information about Goddard College. Before she answered, Wendi asked her its location. She answered, and he then asked her what the main reason was that she chose Goddard. When she replied "environment," he replied, "Well, you didn't say here." (The essay

actually did contain a description of the academic and natural environment.) Wendi told Kazuko that she should put the tuition in the essay.

At this point, Kurt opened the door and told the group that Yasu would join them. Yasu moved a desk into the circle, and Sidik said, "Why don't we start on Yasu's paper?" Yasu replied, "Me? Now?" and Wendi said, "Yeah." Yasu began to read his three long paragraphs which contained some information from the library research. When he finished, Sidik commented, "I think it's good," and Wendi echoed, "I think it's good." Then Sidik said that Yasu confused the reader, because when he discussed the advantages of the college and the high tuition, he was telling the reader to "go but don't go." Wendi told Yasu he had not given the reasons why he wanted to go to this school. Yasu replied, "Why? Why, because, this good electric engineer . . . ," and added that he had not mentioned that his major was math. Sidik told Yasu he was criticizing the paper because "you're supposed to say what school you like." Wendi then asked why he had written about "alumnus," and Yasu explained that "you could get entered to a company for that." Wendi told Yasu that he should not write "I think," that "you didn't really get the comments from what you thought." (His essay contained six "I think"s). Yasu replied that his "I think" meant "these things based on common sense." Wendi said that the writing was "supposed to be based on facts that you got before in the library."

Kurt, who had entered, told Wendi, "I agree, it should be a combination of both: the facts, and what you feel." He gave them a

time to finish by, and said, "Good advice." All group members laughed, and Kurt left. Wendi told Yasu that he needed facts, but that it was good, "It's just the way people read." Wendi then said, "Let's go (back) to Kazuko's," and Yasu echoed, "Kazuko." Kazuko had been listening but had not made any comments. Sidik then said, "Your paper's bad." Kazuko laughed. Sidik continued that her paper was written as if she were answering a question, and that she talked about the environment although she had never visited Vermont. Wendi interjected that it were as if Kazuko had begun with the second paragraph. Sidik then told her, "If you give [the paper to] an American reader, he's gonna go like this (sound of crumpling paper), he's gonna wad it up. Do you understand?" Kazuko said "Yeah." Yasu told Kazuko quietly that she did not have to write a new introduction, but instead should change the order of the paragraphs. She asked Yasu, "So if I put this paragraph like this?" and Yasu nodded. Sidik then asked Kazuko if she believed all the good things she had written about Goddard, saying, "They make it look beautiful, you know, like advertising." Kazuko replied, "Yeah." Wendi asked what she meant by "environment," and added, "It doesn't have to do with the environment, but with the live (/llv/) on campus." Sidik and Wendi discussed whether the essay was supposed to be about a school they really liked or not, and Sidik said, "I think we're ready to go."

During the twenty-minute discussion of Kazuko's paper, Kazuko had contributed to 19.5%, Wendi 33%, Sidik 41%, and Yasu (who arrived late) 7% of the interaction. During the fifteen minute

discussion of Yasu's paper, Yasu had contributed to 25%, Wendi 35%, Sidik 40%, and Kazuko 0% of the interaction. Figure 5 presents a profile of Group 5's interaction in thirty-five minutes.
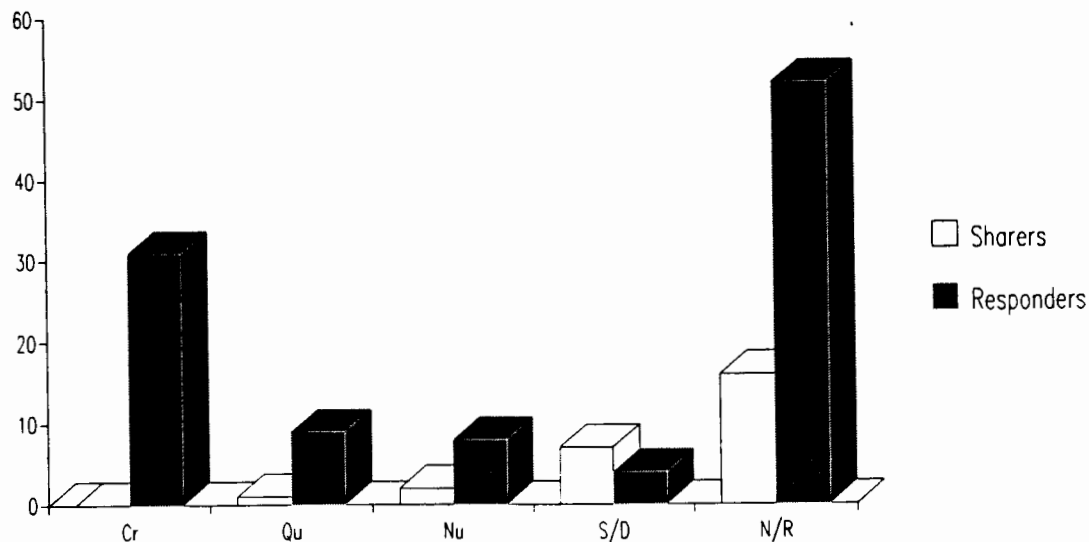
Figure 5. Group 5: (*Kazuko, Yasu,* Wendi, Sidik), thirty-five minutes.

After the students had written a second draft of these papers, Kurt had them edit each other's papers for 15 minutes and then collected their first and second drafts. Using his scale, Kurt gave all of the first drafts "√"s except for Yasu's which got a "+," and he gave the following evaluations for the second essays: Eri, Wendi and Dao received "++," Kazuko, Nicolae, Sidik and Yasu received "+," Ling received "√+" and Hamoodei received "√."

The class spent much of the eighth week watching a video of "The Handmaid's Tale," and were then asked to write a

comparison/contrast essay between the novel and the film. They spent part of the ninth week researching topics for the term paper they were asked to write, and on the forty-first day of class during the ninth week they were asked to write a "standard essay" on the topic: "What advice would you give to someone who plans on visiting your country?" The following day their essays were returned to them with several copies, and they were asked to read their essays aloud and respond to these questions: 1) What parts do you like/dislike about the essay? 2) Is it convincing? and 3) Does anything interfere with the message? Many of the instructors at this institution were at a convention during this week, and some students had decided it was a vacation. For this reason only three students were present for the third session of peer response groups.

Group 6

The students who attended the class and participated in this peer response group were Wendi, Dao, and Nicolae. They sat alone in a circle in their classroom.

Wendi told Dao, "Ladies first," and she read her four-paragraph essay aloud. Both Wendi and Nicolae reacted to her descriptions of the mosquitoes in Thailand, and this led to a discussion of the weather in Thailand. Nicolae commented that Dao had given a lot of information, but little advice. Dao asked if the essay was convincing, and Nicolae replied that it was. Wendi said that he liked the introduction, and Nicolae commented that it had scared him. Nicolae and Wendi discussed whether the advice about "anti-

mosquito medicine" was necessary; Wendi stated that it was not but Nicolae disagreed. Wendi and Nicolae compared the quantity of mosquitoes in Romania with that in Southeast Asia. Then Dao· suggested that they move to the next essay. Wendi offered to read his, and have Nicolae close.

During the fifteen minute discussion of Dao's paper, Dao had contributed to 18%, Wendi 43%, and Nicolae 39% of the interaction.

After Wendi read, Nicolae commented that the introduction, as in Dao's paper, was useful, and that he had given good advice and good information. Dao pressed Wendi to explain what Indonesian food he had called "delicious," as she would like to know specifics. Wendi agreed to give her a "menu." Wendi described the cheap and delicious food that is sold on the streets in Indonesia. Dao and Nicolae suggested that Nicolae should read.

During the ten minute discussion of Wendi's paper, Wendi had contributed to 31%, Dao 35%, and Nicolae 34% of the interaction.

As soon as he finished, Nicolae told Dao that her essay was better, but she disagreed. Wendi found Nicolae's essay to be "more intellectual," and "like I'm getting more information." Nicolae told Wendi that the advice was not to mix in ethnic politics, and spent some minutes explaining the problems between the Romanians and ethnic Hungarians to Wendi and Dao. The conversation then moved to the current problems in Yugoslavia. Then Dao commented that Nicolae's information about women kissing each other when meeting was interesting. Wendi and Nicolae found that people in Indonesia and Romania invariably shake hands when meeting. Dao was

surprised, and said that in Thailand people "cannot touch in public."
Wendi and Nicolae expressed surprise at this, and Dao commented
how difficult American culture was for her when people touched
each other. Wendi asked Nicolae if he disliked Hungarians, and he
replied that he did not as long as they avoided talking of politics.
Wendi compared this to a Pakistani friend who would not discuss
India. Wendi concluded the discussion.

During the twenty minute discussion of Nicolae's paper,
Nicolae had contributed to 42%, Wendi 34%, and Dao 24% of the
interaction. Figure 6 presents a profile of Group 6's interaction in
forty-five minutes.
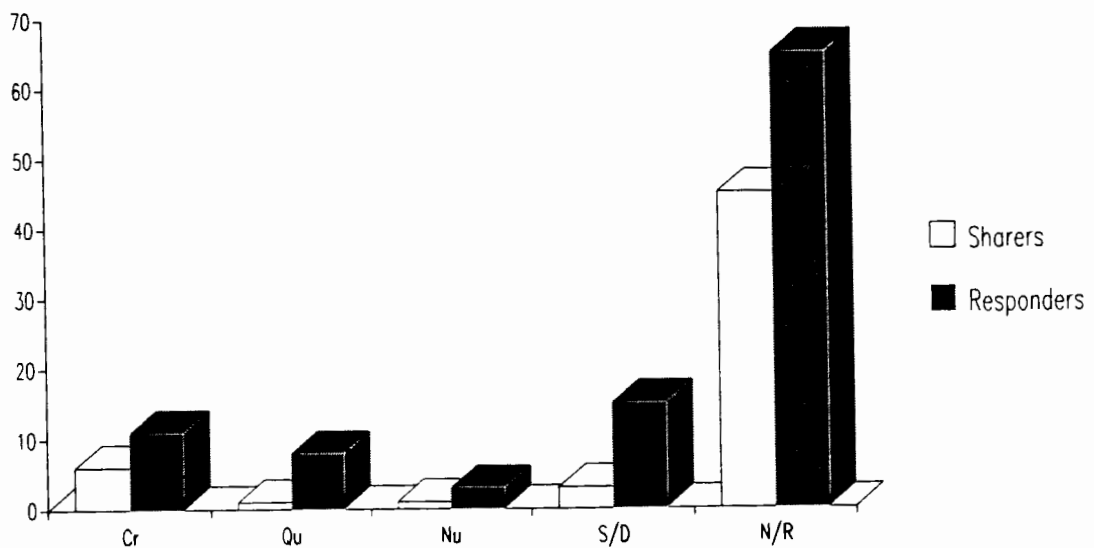
Figure 6. Group 6: (*Dao, Wendi, Nicolae*), forty-five minutes.

Profiles of Students Sharing and Responding to
Writing While Meeting in Peer Response Groups

Figures 7-20 show profiles of individuals as they share their writing and respond to other's writing during the second session of peer response groups. These figures were based on Kluckhohn's model for studying cultures (Kohls, 1987). Their purpose is to reveal what "kind" of a sharer and responder an individual was while in one of the groups discussing the writing.

It was supposed that, when discussing the writing, the sharers' and the responders' speech would be directed toward any of the five categories of Jacobs et al's (1981) composition profile: C (content), O (organization), V (vocabulary), L (language use) and M (mechanics). Interaction about any of these categories was divided into four groups of intention: Cr (criticism or intending to change what is written), Qu (question), Nu (neutral interaction) and S/D (support or defense of the writing). The interaction is also coded to show whether the individual initiated the topics, said them in response to previous discussion, or did both of these things. Figures show students' interaction as sharers of writing and responders to writing separately.

The figures give a profile of an individual in one specific situation. For example, boxes representing a writer whose interaction has been directed at defending her or his content will be filled in at the top right of the figure; the boxes representing the same person as a responder who criticizes the mechanics of another student's writing will be filled in at the bottom left of the figure.

The students whose profiles are given here are those who attended the second session of peer response groups regularly. Wendi was unable to share his writing, and Ling attended only·one short group; therefore they were not included. The figures do not represent the amount of a certain type of interaction that occurred, nor the order that it occurred in, only the fact that it·did occur.

A short description of each student as a writer and responder in peer response group accompanies each figure. The percentage of interaction that each student devoted to each of the five areas of writing and to interaction not directly related to the writing are also given as a supplement to the figures. The percentages were calculated for the particular peer response group that each figure depicts. This information is also displayed in Table VII.

Hamoodei as a Sharer and Responder in Groups 2, 3, and 4

When reading his writing aloud, Hamoodei laughed openly at the mistakes he found. He agreed with his peers' suggestions to add some details, reword some sentences and change the punctuation. He did not appear to be embarrassed about his writing, but rather realistic about the number of small things that needed revision. He initiated questions about the vocabulary and mechanics he had used in his essay. At one point, he turned to the instructor for advice.

As an example, while contributing to 48% of Group 4's interaction as a writer, 33% of Hamoodei's interaction about the writing was directed toward content, 22% toward vocabulary, 11%

toward language use, 22% toward the mechanics and 11% was not related to the writing.

As a responder, Hamoodei let the other students do much of the talking in Groups 2 and 3. At one point he reassured Nicolae when Nicolae remembered something he had wanted to include. He asked Eri some questions about Rice University that were unrelated to the essay. He complimented Dao several times on her essay, and then later in the discussion suggested that she add some details to her essay and he gave her a specific example of how she could do this. Most of Hamoodei's comments were in response to topics that other group members had initiated.

While contributing to 32% of Group 3's interaction as a responder to Dao, 100% of Hamoodei's interaction was about the content of the writing.

Figure 8 gives a profile of Hamoodei as he shared his writing with Group 4, and Figure 9 gives a profile of him as he responded to Dao's writing in Group 3.

A key to the figures is: DOWN: C=content; O=organization; V=vocabulary; L=language use; and M=mechanics. ACROSS: Cr=criticism; Qu=question; Nu=neutral interaction; and S/D=support or defense. Boxes shaded diagonally to the right indicate that the student initiated the utterance; boxes shaded diagonally to the left indicate that the student was responding to a comment previously initiated; boxes shaded vertically and horizontially indicate that the student did both of these. Names of students who shared writing are given in italics.
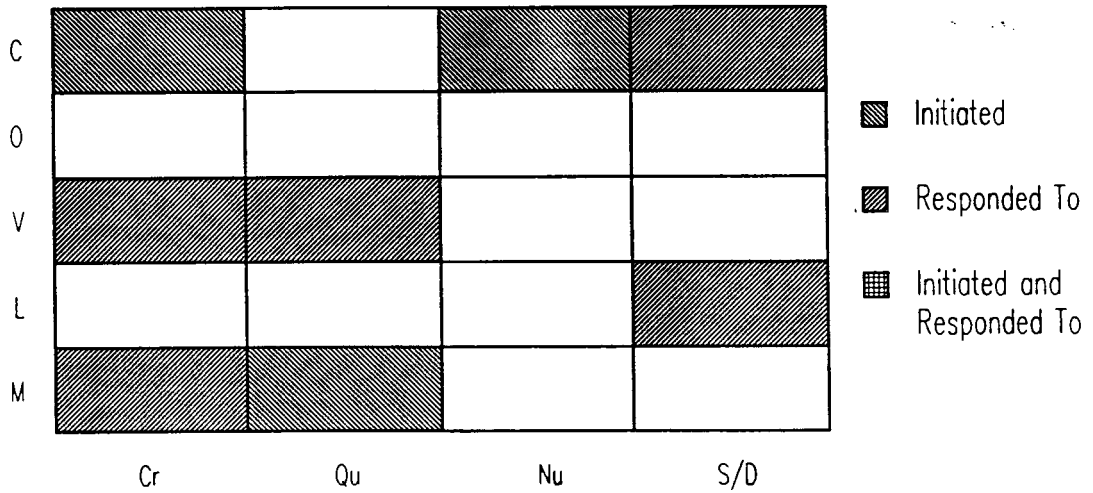
Figure 7. Hamoodei as Sharer, 20 minutes, Group 4 (Nicolae, Dao, Eri).
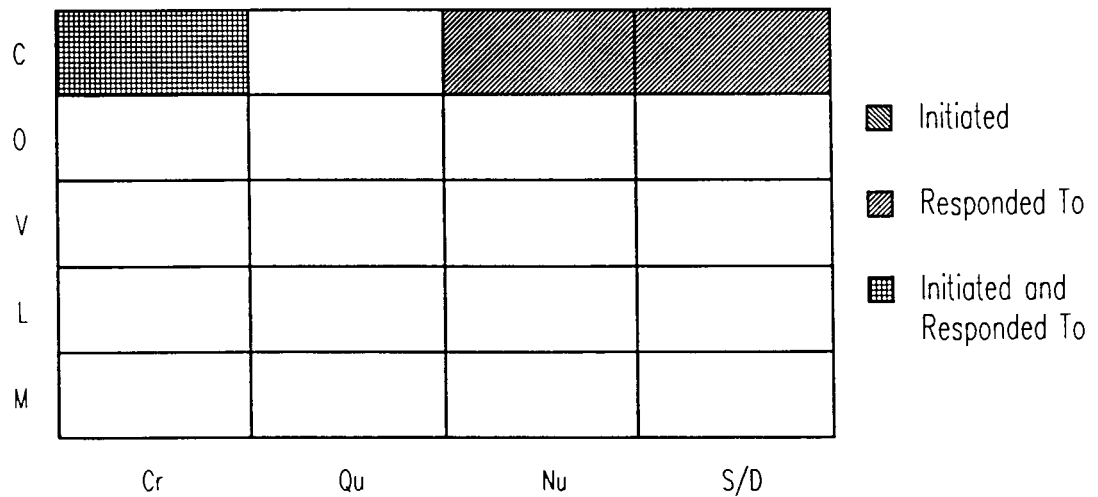
Figure 8. Hamoodei as Responder, 20 minutes, Group 3 (*Dao*, Nicolae, Eri).

Eri as a Sharer and Responder in Groups 2 and 3

While sharing, Eri read quietly and did not initiate any comments about her writing. She defended her conclusion by saying that it was intentionally repetitive; and disagreed with Dao's advice to vary the phrases she used. She initiated no questions about her writing, and her group members moved quickly to another paper.

While contributing to 18% of Group 3's interaction as a writer, 66% of Eri's interaction about the writing was directed toward organization, and 33% was not related to the writing.

When responding, Eri told Nicolae to begin before her, and after comments by other members she asked a question about the organization of his essay. Later she criticized the content of one phrase, but when he asked her for other suggestions, she had none. Near the end of the discussion, she volunteered that her statistics for this university had been different. Eri responded to Dao's reading by asking her some personal questions. Eri was silent during much of the discussion except near the end, when she told Dao she needed to be more specific.

As an example, while contributing to 5% of Group 3's interaction as a responder to Dao, 50% of Eri's interaction about the writing was directed toward content and 50% was not related to the writing.

Figure 9 gives a profile of Eri as she shared her writing with Group 3, and Figure 10 gives a profile of her as she responded to Dao's writing in Group 3.

Figure 9. Eri as Sharer, 10 minutes, Group 3 (Nicolae, Dao, Hamoodei).
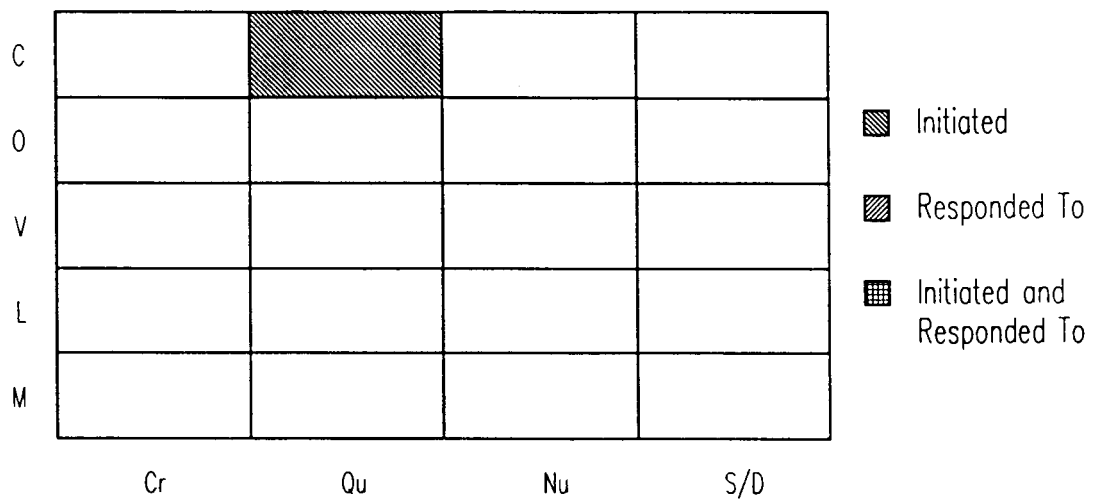
Figure 10. Eri as Responder, 20 minutes, Group 3 (*Dao*, Nicolae, Hamoodei).

Dao as a Sharer and Responder in Groups 2, 3, 4 and 6

While listening to her group's advice, Dao both defended her
content and agreed that she needed to rewrite her essay in a less
personal style. Twice she asked peers follow-up questions about
their advice to her. Many of her comments concerned the use of
specific words in certain cases. When she shared her writing in
Group 6, her time was spent describing and discussing Thailand's
culture and climate rather than asking questions about wording and
form.

While contributing to 27% of Group 3's interaction as a writer,
45% of her interaction about the writing was directed toward
content, 9% toward organization, 9% toward language use, and 37%
was not related to the writing.

When responding, Dao praised the content of one essay but
later suggested that Nicolae needed to change the order of the ideas.
In another group, she rephrased Eri's question about organization so
that Nicolae would understand, and she made several comments
about the wording of sentences. When responding to Eri's writing,
Dao began by criticizing the organization, but then complimented
Eri's style. Dao did not give Hamoodei much response until Nicolae
gave him advice about some wording that she disagreed with. When
Wendi shared his essay in Group 6, Dao found one instance where she
thought he needed to be more specific.

As an example, while contributing to 49% of Group 2's
interaction as a responder to Nicolae, 30% of Dao's interaction about

the writing was directed toward content, 6% toward organization, 44% toward language use, and 10% was not related to the writing.

Figure 11 gives a profile of Dao as she shared her writing with Group 3, and Figure 12 gives a profile of her as she responded to Nicolae's writing in Group 2.

Kazuko as a Sharer and Responder in Group 5

Kazuko initiated no comments about her writing, and replied to Sidik's and Wendi's barrage of questions with short sounds of agreement. A few times she defended or tried to explain the content of her essay. She asked Yasu one follow-up question when he made a direct suggestion as to how she could improve her writing.

While contributing to 19% of Group 5's interaction as a writer, 20% of Kazuko's interaction about the writing was directed toward content and 80% was not related to the writing.

During the response to Yasu's paper, Kazuko listened attentively but made no comments. (Interaction = 0%).

Figure 13 gives a profile of Kazuko as she shared her writing with Group 5, and Figure 14 gives a profile of her as she responded to Yasu's writing in Group 5.

Yasu as a Sharer and Responder in Group 5

Yasu defended the content of his essay when it was criticized by Wendi and Sidik, but he did not initiate any comments. He defended his use of "I think" several times as Wendi criticized it.
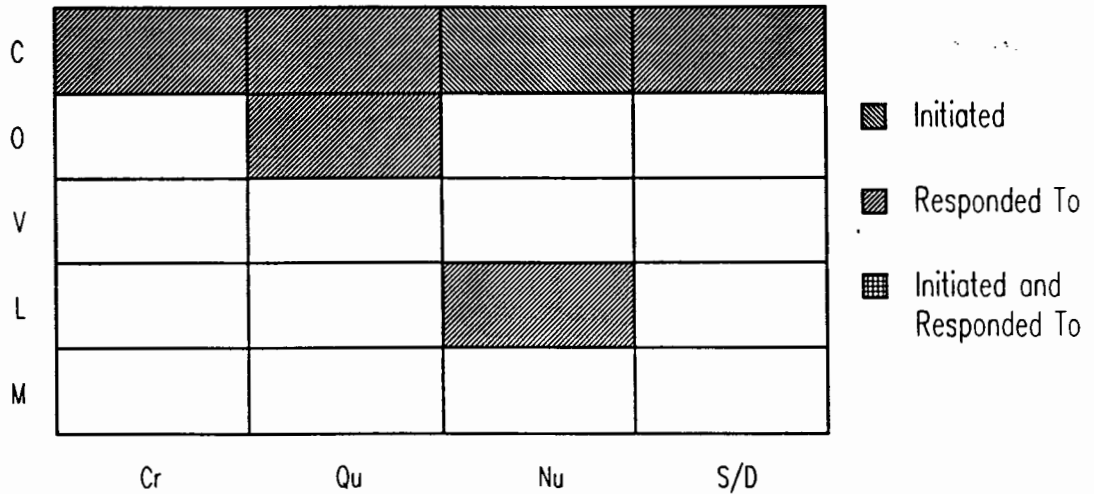
Figure 11. Dao as Sharer, 20 minutes, Group 3 (Nicolae, Eri, Hamoodei).
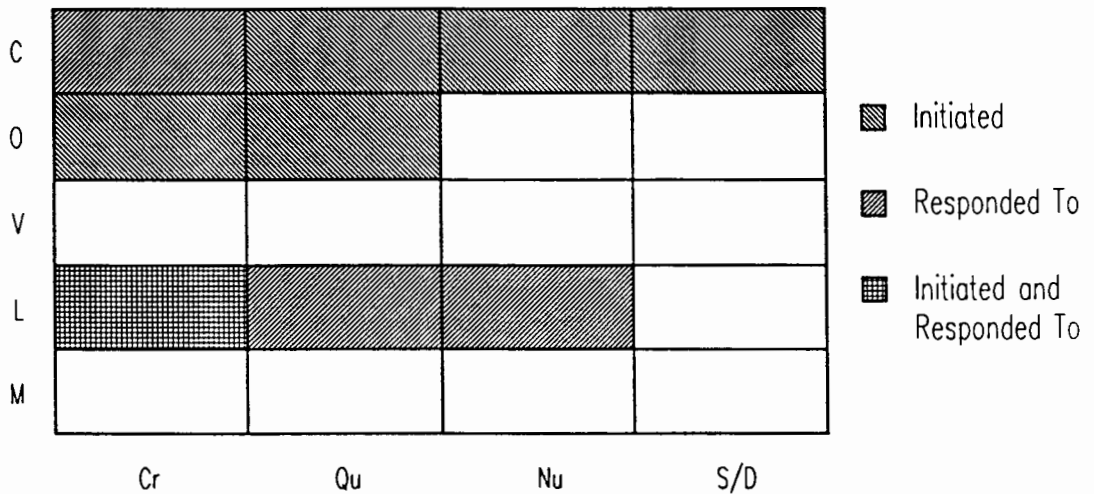
Figure 12. Dao as Responder, 20 minutes, Group 3 (*Nicolae*, Eri, Hamoodei).
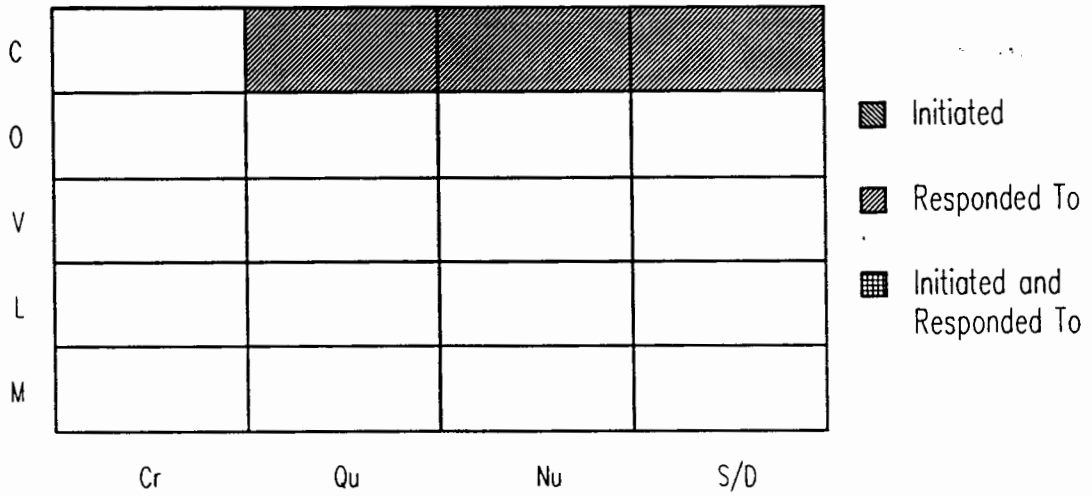
Figure 13. Kazuko as Sharer, 20 minutes, Group 5 (Yasu, Wendi, Sidik).
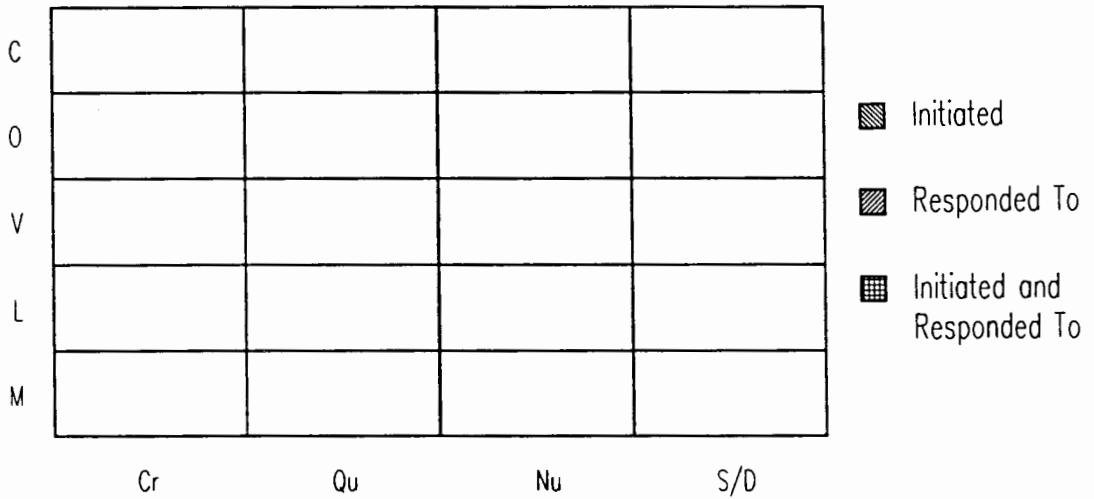
Figure 14. Kazuko as Responder, 15 minutes, Group 5 (*Yasu*, Wendi, Sidik).

While contributing to 25% of Group 5's interaction as a writer, 30% of Yasu's interaction about the writing was directed toward content, 40% toward language use, and 30% was not related to the writing.

When responding to Kazuko, Yasu asked her a question about a topic that Wendi and Sidik had raised and offered her some reassurance in response to their criticism, but he did not initiate any interaction.

While contributing to 7% of Group 5's interaction as a responder to Kazuko, 66% of his interaction about the writing was directed toward organization, and 33% was not related to the writing.

Figure 15 gives a profile of Yasu as he shared his writing with Group 5, and Figure 16 gives a profile of him as he responded to Kazuko's writing in Group 5.
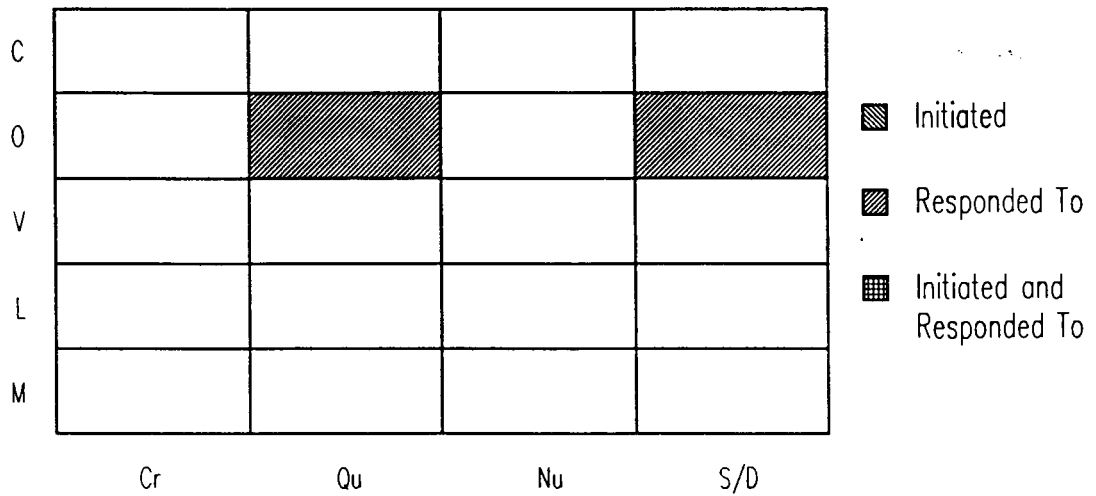
Nicolae as Sharer and Responder in Groups 2, 3, 4 and 6

Nicolae initiated and responded to comments about his writing by defending it and agreeing that some of it needed to be changed. He repeatedly asked his peers for their advice about his writing, although he did not always accept it when it was given. He listened attentively to Dao's first three comments, although with the fourth his reaction caused the group to go to another essay. In Group 6, he was concerned that his peers understand his writing's message, and thus initiated discussion about the social situation in Romania.
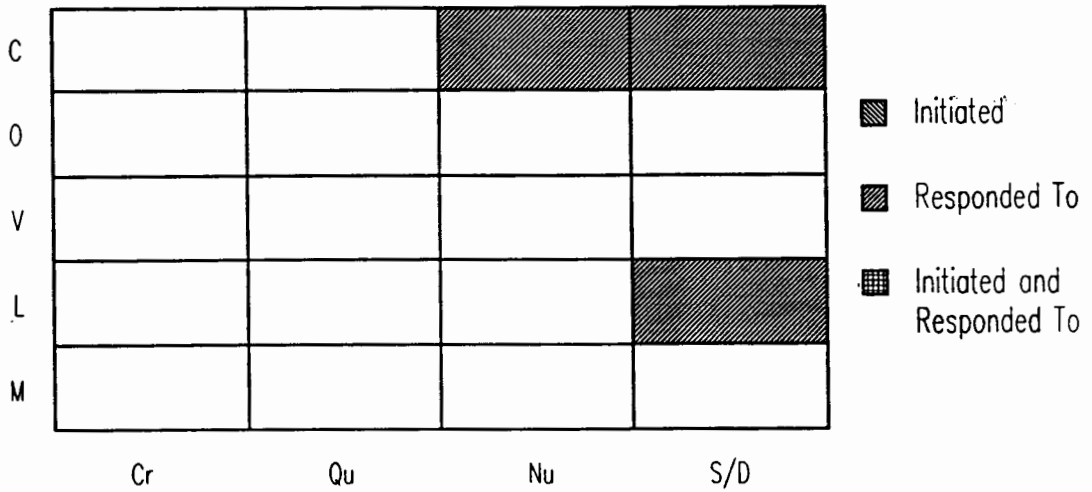
Figure 15. Yasu as Sharer, 15 minutes, Group 5 (Kazuko, Wendi, Sidik).
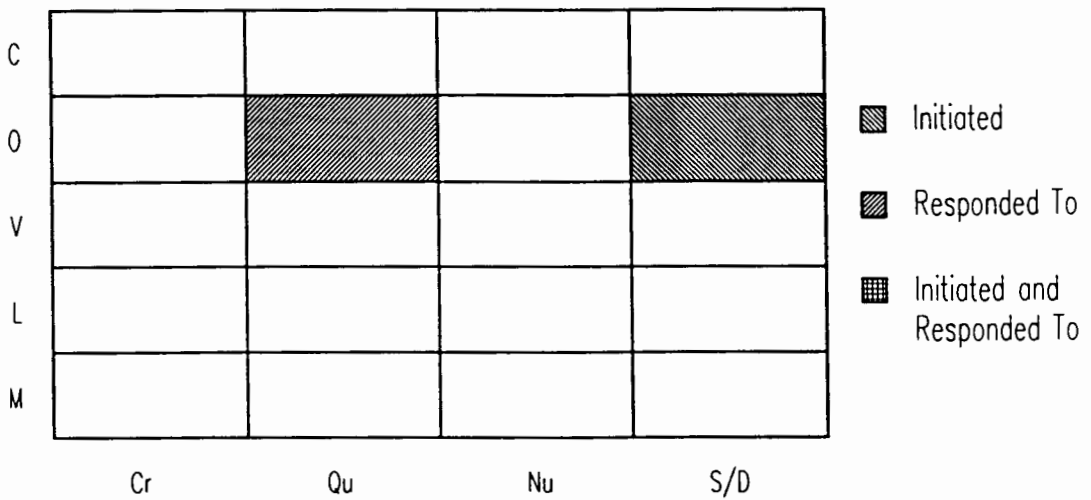
Figure 16. Yasu as Responder, 20 minutes, Group 5 (*Kazuko,* Wendi, Sidik).

As an example, while contributing to 57% of Group 2's interaction as a writer, 18% of Nicolae's interaction about the writing was directed toward content, 14% toward organization, 32% toward language use, and 36% was not related to the writing.

As a responder, Nicolae often told his peers to add more details, sometimes giving exact suggestions. When Dao read about studying at Mt. Vernon, his first reaction was about content. When responding to Hamoodei, Nicolae summarized his three pieces of advice. He initiated praise, questions and criticism. He often referred to the questions that the group had been given to answer.

As an example, while contributing to 47% of Group 4's interaction as a responder to Hamoodei, 44% of Nicolae's interaction about the writing was directed toward content, 33% toward vocabulary, and 22% toward the mechanics.

Figure 17 gives a profile of Nicolae as he shared his writing with Group 3, and Figure 18 gives a profile of him as he responded to Hamoodei's writing in Group 4.

Sidik as a Sharer and Responder in Groups 1 and 5

When he shared his writing, Sidik did not initiate any comments, and his reaction to the advice of the other students was to defend his writing. He quickly directed the conversation toward topics that were not directly related to the writing.

As an example, while contributing to 65% of Group 1's interaction as a writer, 24% of Sidik's interaction about the writing was directed toward content, 78% was not related to the writing.
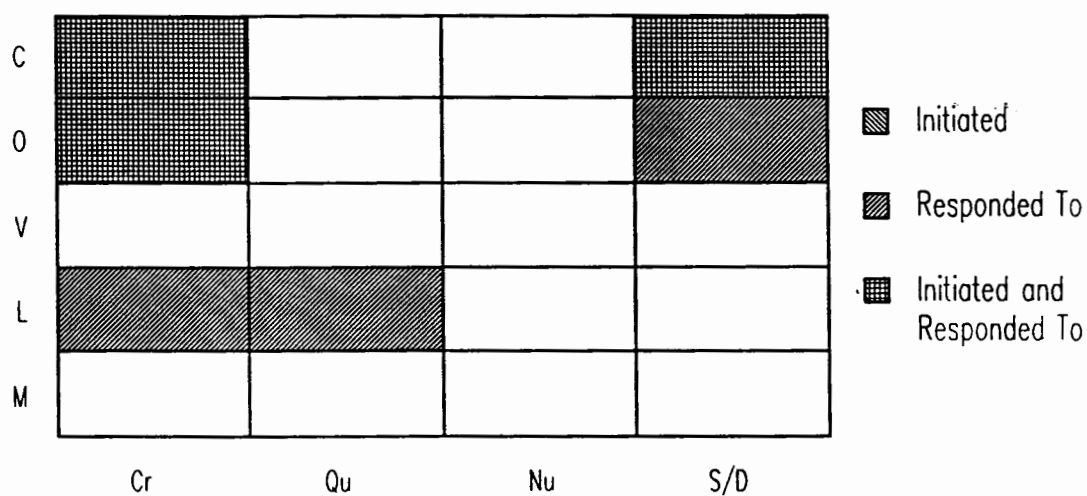
Figure 17. Nicolae as Sharer, 20 minutes, Group 2 (Eri, Dao, Hamoodei).
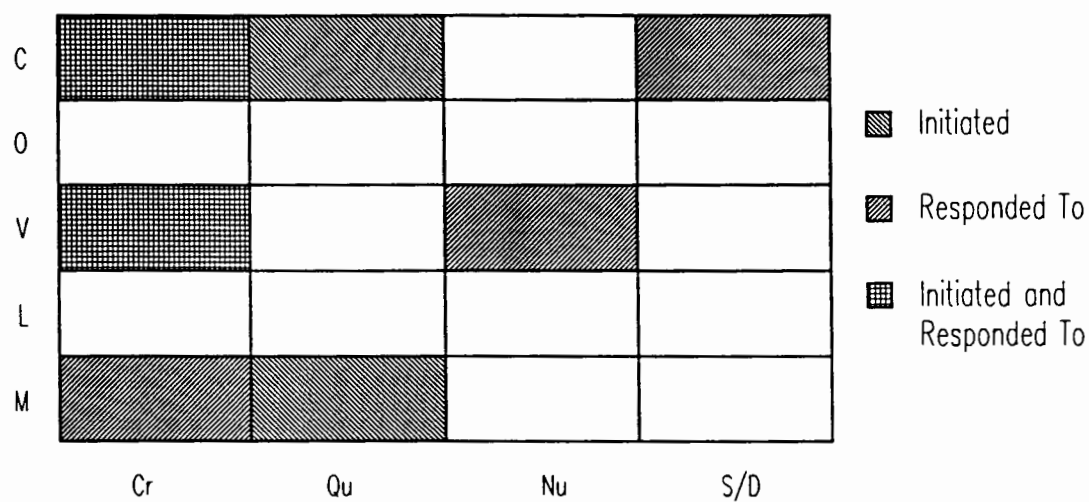
Figure 18. Nicolae as Responder, 20 minutes, Group 4 (*Hamoodei*, Eri, Dao).

As a responder, Sidik criticized the content and vocabulary of the essays and told his peers that they needed more details. He told both Ling and Kazuko that they sounded like they had been to the universities when they had not. He gave the most unguarded criticism of all the students, and offered few compliments. He was quick to direct the conversation toward topics that were not directly related to the writing, but rather to his personal life.

As an example, while contributing to 41% of Group 5's interaction as a responder to Kazuko, 6% of Sidik's interaction about the writing was directed toward content, 10% toward organization, 10% toward vocabulary, and 74% was not related to the writing.

Figure 19 gives a profile of Sidik as he shared his writing with Group 1, and Figure 20 gives a profile of him as he responded to Kazuko's writing in Group 5.

Other Data

Tables VII and VIII display the percentage of interaction students devoted to five areas of writing and to interaction not directly related to their writing while sharing and responding in the peer response groups graphed in Figures 7-20. Percentages are only given for students who participated in both activities. The five areas of writing listed are content, organization, vocabulary, language use, mechanics, and interaction not directly related to the writing, abbreviated as N/R in the table.
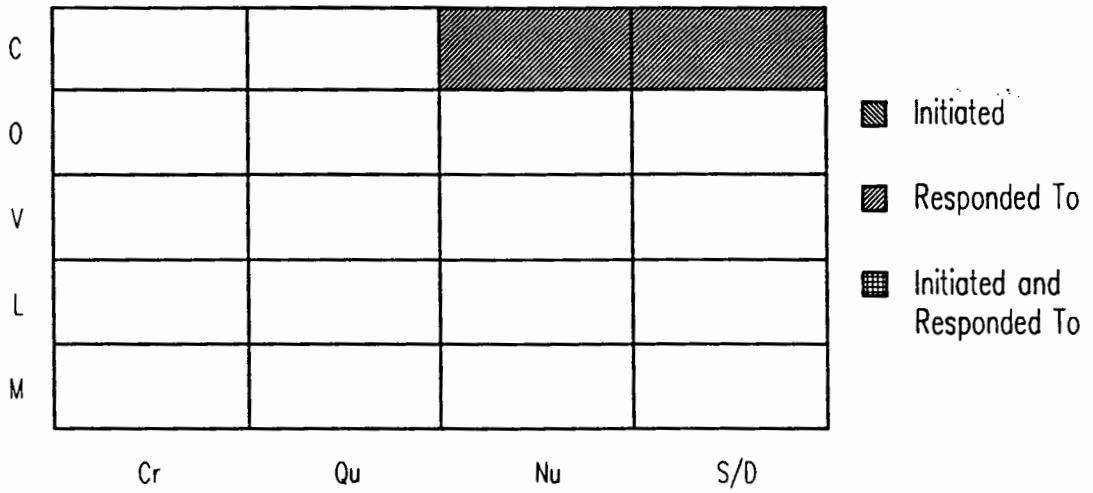
Figure 19. Sidik as Sharer, 10 minutes, Group 1 (Ling, Wendi).
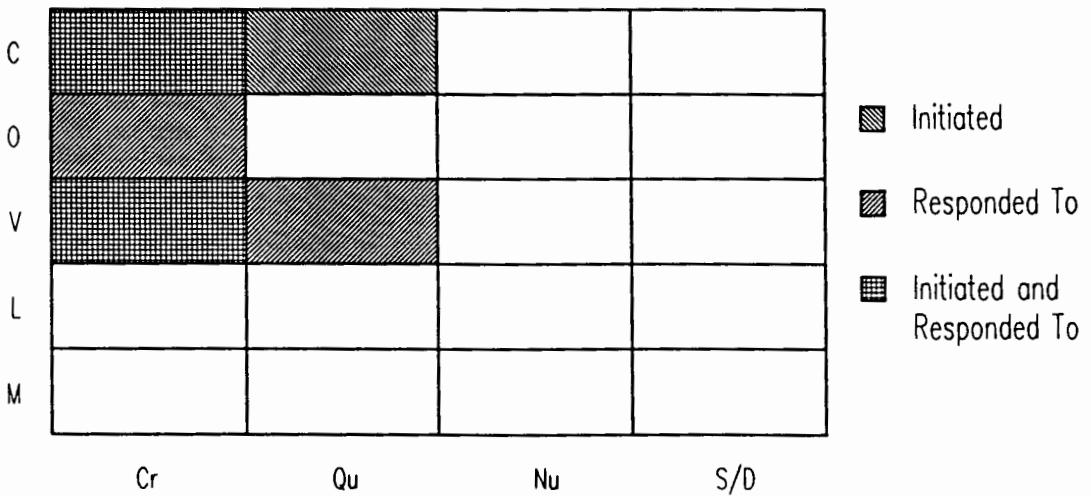
Figure 20. Sidik as Responder, 20 minutes, Group 5 (*Kazuko*, Yasu, Wendi).

TABLE VII

PERCENTAGE OF INTERACTION DEVOTED TO AREAS OF WRITING AND
NON-RELATED SPEECH BY SHARERS IN PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

Peer	Content	Organization	Vocab.	Lang. Use	Mechanics	N/R
Eri	–	66%	–	–	–	33%
Kazuko	20%	–	–	–	–	80%
Yasu	30%	–	–	40%	–	30%
Dao	45%	9%	–	–	–	36%
Nicolae	18%	14%	–	32%	–	36%
Sidik	24%	–	–	–	–	78%
Hamoodei	33%	–	22%	11%	22%	11%

TABLE VIII

PERCENTAGE OF INTERACTION DEVOTED TO AREAS OF WRITING AND
NON-RELATED SPEECH BY RESPONDERS IN PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

Peer	Content	Organization	Vocab.	Lang. Use	Mechanics	N/R
Eri	50%	–	–	–	–	50%
Kazuko	–	–	–	–	–	–
Yasu	–	66%	–	–	–	34%
Dao	30%	6%	–	44%	–	10%
Nicolae	44%	–	33%	–	22%	–
Sidik	6%	10%	10%	–	–	74%
Hamoodei	100%	–	–	–	–	–

Changes in Students' Second Drafts
as a Result of Peer Response Groups

It was possible to examine the first and second drafts of seven

of the nine students. Two of them, Sidik and Wendi, did not turn in

first drafts, so a comparison was not possible. Below is a short summary of the changes that seven students made while rewriting their essays after meeting in peer response groups.

Eri. Eri was told that she wrote clearly, and advised not to add anything new to her conclusion, to vary her words, and to be more specific. In her second draft, Eri made some small changes, such as adding a comma, changing a singular noun to a plural and adding "in comparison with other private university" to the sentence "Tuition is not so high." This was something her group had discussed when responding to Nicolae's essay. Other than this, she reproduced her essay as she had written it. The first draft contained 425 words and 7 paragraphs, and the second contained 431 words and 7 paragraphs. (The first draft received a "√;" the second draft a "++.")

Kazuko. Kazuko was advised to add more details to her essay, to write a new introduction, write topic sentences, to write less personally, to change "environment" to "social life," and that "actively experimental" was not acceptable. For her second draft, Kazuko wrote a new essay, using more formal language and adding more numbers and statistics. "Environment" was replaced with "academic environment," and "actively experimental" was removed. The first draft contained 201 words and 4 paragraphs, and the second contained 200 words and 4 paragraphs. (The first draft received a "√;" the second draft a "+.")

Yasu. Yasu was told that his essay was good, but that his word "alumnus" had no relevance to the subject, that he should use fewer "I think"s, and he needed to add more information from the library.

His second draft was based on the first, but contained a new paragraph full of statistics and facts. "Alumnus" remained, and the number of "I think,"s, six, did not change. The first draft contained 278 words and 3 paragraphs, and the second contained 383 words and 4 paragraphs. (The first draft received a "+;" the second draft a "+.")

Ling. The only comment Ling received was that she had described her topic well. In her second essay, she added many statistics and facts about her subject, although the original essay was still recognizable. . Her first draft contained 314 words and 4 paragraphs, and the second contained 408 words and 5 paragraphs. (The first draft received a "√;" the second draft a "√.")

Dao. Dao was told that her essay was nice, but that she must make it less personal and add more details and numbers. She was advised to add information about the teachers, and explain why she wanted to study liberal arts at this school and not another. As Kazuko, Dao wrote a completely new essay. She added statistics in several places, and more details. Her style changed. For example, what had been "(studying at Mt. Vernon) would make me a happy girl with smiles all the time" became "Bright futures can be catched here, at Mt. Vernon." The first draft contained 345 words and 6 paragraphs, and the second contained 457 words, 6 paragraphs and was given a title. (The first draft received a "√;" the second draft a "++.")

Nicolae. Nicolae was told that he wrote well. He was advised to combine his two paragraph introduction into one, to mention why

living on campus was good, to change "choose" to "chose" and several other wording differences. Other than combining his two introductory paragraphs, Nicolae's second draft was identical to the first one until he reached the end of the seventh paragraph. There he added a sentence that had been in Eri's essay, about Rice having the same tuition for residents and non-residents. He also rewrote the concluding sentence, adding information about the student-faculty ratio and the faculty that were not in the first draft before concluding as he had previously. The first draft contained 407 words and eight paragraphs, and the second contained 431 words and eight paragraphs. Both were given titles. (The first draft received a "$\checkmark$;" the second draft a "+.")

Hamoodei. Hamoodei was told that he needed some punctuation in one place, to mention the tuition, to give more details, and to change the word "finally" to "in addition," although another member advised against the last piece of advice. The instructor had also told him how to rewrite one sentence. Just as Nicolae had done, on his second draft, Hamoodei copied the first essay almost exactly, except for the sentence the instructor had given him, until he reached the sixth paragraph. There he added another paragraph of statistics and numbers, and also added another sentence onto the conclusion. The first draft contained 319 words and 5 paragraphs, and the second contained 409 words and 7 paragraphs. (The first draft received a "$\checkmark$;" the second draft a "$\checkmark$.")

<u>The Peer Response Groups: Participation, Organizing</u>
<u>the Group, Reading Aloud and Other Information</u>

Of the thirty-two fifty-minute class sessions that the students spent with Kurt, the students spent 41% of the class time working together (9% in pairs and 32% in small groups). Of the total class time, 10% (included in the 41%) was spent in peer response groups.

Using the tally sheet, it was possible to show which students had read aloud or made comments to organize while they met in peer response groups. Using the participation measurement, it was possible to compare students' overall participation, as sharers of writing and responders to writing. Because there were no data from the first session of peer response groups and only certain students had attended the third, the data here have been averaged from the second session of peer response groups.

The average participation of the three students from Japan was as follows. Eri participated an average of 18% as a sharer and 7% as a responder; Kazuko participated an average of 20% as a sharer and 0% as a responder; and Yasu participated an average of 25% as a sharer and 3% as a responder. As a sharer, Yasu read aloud from his writing several times (aside from the initial reading).

The average participation of the three other students from the Far East was as follows: Ling participated an average of 48% as a sharer and 15% as a responder; Wendi participated an average of 22% as a responder (insufficient data as a sharer); and Dao participated an average of 27% as a writer and 29% as a responder. While

sharing, Dao read aloud from her writing once. While responding, Wendi and Dao both read aloud, and made comments to organize their group several times.

The average participation of the student from Romania and two students from the Middle East was as follows: Nicolae participated an average of 57% as a writer and 36% as a responder; Sidik participated an average of 65% as a writer and 44% as a responder, and Hamoodei participated an average of 44% as a writer and 15% as a responder. As sharers, Nicolae, Sidik and Hamoodei all read aloud from their writing several times, and Nicolae made several comments to organize his group. As responders, all three read aloud from the writing several times, and Sidik and Hamoodei made several comments to organize their groups.

STUDENTS IN AN ESOL WRITING CLASSROOM

Attendance and Participation

The class met for a total of forty-seven sessions. Eri, Kazuko and Yasu were usually either absent or on time. Each had between three and four absences. Eri was late to class once, and Kazuko and Yasu were never late. Similarly, Nicolae had three absences and was late once.

Ling had ten absences, because she worked during the morning once a week. She was never late. Wendi always attended class, and was late only once. Sidik always attended class; however, he was late six times (average time five minutes). Dao was absent once and

late four times (the average time was three minutes). Hamoodei was absent seven times and late nine times (average time seven minutes).

Students varied between being sometimes absent but never late (Eri, Kazuko, Yasu, Ling, Nicolae), sometimes late but seldom absent (Dao, Sidik), seldom late and never absent (Wendi), and sometimes late and sometimes absent (Hamoodei).

Class activities were divided between lecture, open discussions, and group and/or pair work. Using the participation measure, student participation was measured in an open discussion which occurred during the second week of class when all students were present. The results were as follows: Eri participated 5%, Wendi 22%, Nicolae 26%, Sidik 31%, and Hamoodei 16%. Kazuko, Yasu, Ling, and Dao were present but silent.

Participation in a group activity during the fourth week of class when all nine students were present was also measured. In one group, Eri participated 12%, Yasu 14%, Ling 2%, Nicolae 32%, and Hamoodei 10%; in the other, Kazuko participated 3%, Wendi 29%, Dao 33%, and Sidik 31%.

A comparison of student participation in these four situations -- open discussion, group activities, and as sharers and responders in peer response groups -- revealed the following information. Participation was almost invariably highest when students were sharing their own writing in peer response groups. The highest number of low scores came from the open discussion, and these were mostly from female students. All females participated more in the

class groups and peer response groups than in the open discussion. Students' participation averages were often similar, as with for example Eri (5%, 12%, 18%, 7%), and Sidik (31%, 31%, 65%, 45%). Students who were more often late to class generally participated more than students who were seldom late (see Table IX for a comparison of student participation in four activities).

TABLE IX

A COMPARISON OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN OPEN DISCUSSIONS, GROUP ACTIVITIES, AND RESPONSE GROUP ACTIVITIES

Student	Discussion	Group Activity	Sharing	& Responding to Writing
Eri	5%	12%	18%	7%
Kazuko	0%	7%	20%	0%
Yasu	0%	14%	25%	3%
Ling	0%	2%	48%	15%
Wendi	22%	29%	(no data)	22%
Dao	0%	33%	27%	29%
Nicolae	26%	32%	57%	36%
Sidik	31%	31%	65%	45%
Hamoodei	16%	40%	44%	15%

Changes that Students Reported during the Term

Questions which appeared on the beginning and final questionnaire were aimed at discovering any changes that might occur in the students' desire to write in English, their self-perceptions, their desire for an audience for their writing and their feelings about other people reading what they had written after they

had participated in this class and in the peer response groups. Following are the summarized answers to these questions.

Eri, Kazuko, Yasu, Dao and Sidik all wrote that they liked to write in English both at the beginning and end of class. Ling did not like to write in English, and this did not change. Wendi and Hamoodei reported less desire to write in English at the term end than at the beginning, and Nicolae reported more. It should be noted that on the scale of 1-6, with "6" meaning "very much," eight of the students circled numbers between four and six at the term's end.

At the beginning of the term, Kazuko, Yasu, Ling, Wendi, Nicolae and Sidik thought of themselves as average or good writers, while Eri thought she was "bad" and Dao thought she was "fair" (Hamoodei declined to answer both times). At the term's end, Ling and Nicolae thought of themselves as poor writers, while Dao thought she was good. Thus two students left the class with poorer images of themselves as writers, while one left the class with a better one. Other students' answers did not change, which meant five of eight students continued to believe that they wrote English "normally" or well.

Concerning the audience that these students wanted for their writing, Eri and Ling wanted only the teacher to read it while the other seven students did not mind if their peers and families read their writing as well. Seven students wanted a broad audience, and two, Ling and Eri, a narrow one. This did not change throughout the term.

At the beginning of the term, four students (Nicolae, Wendi, Dao and Sidik) were willing to share their writing with other students, while five students (Eri, Kazuko, Yasu, Ling, and Hamoodei) indicated that they would feel some apprehension about doing so. By the term's end, Wendi indicated that he felt some fear about sharing his writing, while Yasu and Hamoodei felt more willing to share theirs than before. Instead of merely willing, Dao wrote that she felt "excited" when sharing her writing. Nicolae and Sidik were still willing to share their writing and Eri, Kazuko, and Ling were still afraid when they had to do so. At the term's end, therefore, three male students had changed their feelings about sharing their writing. Five students were happy to share their writing while four felt afraid when they had to share theirs.

Students' Feedback Concerning Peer Response Groups and the Class

Questions which appeared on the final questionnaire were aimed at discovering the students' opinions regarding group work, reading their writing aloud, getting feedback from peers, disagreeing with peers' advice, and hearing their peers' writing.

At the end of the class, Eri and Kazuko preferred to work individually in the ESOL writing class, and the other seven students preferred working in groups. While in the peer response groups, Eri, Kazuko and Ling preferred to have their peers read their writing silently. Yasu had no preference, and Wendi, Dao, Nicolae, Sidik and Hamoodei preferred to read their writing aloud.

Eight of nine students had enjoyed getting feedback from their peers about their writing. The four women in the class, Eri, Kazuko, Ling and Dao, liked it because they could see their papers "from other students' point of view." Wendi and Sidik liked the feedback because they "could find mistakes and correct them." Nicolae liked the feedback, but felt that the instructor should have guided it. Yasu did not enjoy getting feedback from his peers, because "some people don't take it seriously."

Seven of the students indicated a passive approach to feedback that they did not agree with. They suggested that they would "just listen" to it, or "try to think more on that point." Dao stated that she always "tried to find a third opinion later on." Kazuko and Yasu, however, stated that they tried to explain their point of view and to understand the other person.

Seven of the students felt that hearing and seeing their peers' writing was a good experience. Kazuko, Ling, Sidik and Hamoodei felt that they "learned things" from their peers' papers. Dao and Wendi liked the chance to "compare my essay with other students." Nicolae felt that he had learned about culture through sharing the writing. Finally, Eri was not sure if it was a good experience, and Yasu did not like the experience because "some people's reading is not good."

All students found thinking of feedback to give their peers to be very difficult. Eri, Wendi and Hamoodei indicated that they looked for "problems with grammar" or "sentence correction." Dao preferred not to give much advice for fear of hurting other students'

feelings, and preferred "to encourage them by pointing out the good things only." Other students did not explain their approach.

Changes in ESOL Students' Writing
from Term Beginning to End

Eight of the students wrote two comparable essays at the beginning and end of the term, which were evaluated independently by two ESOL writing instructors. Four students improved their scores, one student's scores remained the same, and three students' end scores were lower than their beginning ones. The class average for the essays written at the term beginning was 79, and the class average written at the term end was 77. Students whose scores improved were Dao, Eri, Wendi, and Kazuko. Nicolae's score did not change. Students whose scores became worse were Sidik, Yasu, and Hamoodei. For a listing of the scores, see Table X.

TABLE X

COMPARISON OF HOLISTIC EVALUATIONS AT TERM BEGINNING AND END

Student	Term Beginning	Student	Term End
Dao	95	Dao	96
Yasu	90	Yasu	68
Nicolae	82	Nicolae	82
Wendi	84	Wendi	89
Eri	81	Eri	89
Kazuko	66	Kazuko	68
Hamoodei	66	Hamoodei	57
Sidik	69	Sidik	66

THREE INDIVIDUALS IN AN ESOL WRITING CLASSROOM

For the purpose of getting detailed accounts of three diverse students' experiences in peer response groups, Hamoodei, Eri, and Dao were interviewed. In the ESOL writing class, Kurt found Hamoodei to have more difficulty with writing than most of his peers, Eri to be somewhere in the middle of the class, and Dao to be one of his best writers. All were international students. Hamoodei was a Palestinian from Qatar, Eri was Japanese, and Dao was from Thailand. The results of interviews with these students are as follows.

Hamoodei

Cultural and Personal Background. Hamoodei is an eighteen-year-old Palestinian who grew up in Qatar. He had been in the United States for one year at the beginning of this class. The instructor identified him as one of the weaker writers in the class. His reason for being in the class was to receive a high enough TOEFL score to be able to take non-ESOL classes. He had taken the same class the preceding term and failed. In addition to taking this class, he was also repeating advanced ESOL reading and grammar, and taking second year Calculus, but he had passed the advanced ESOL speech class two terms before. He "hated ESOL so much," and planned to study either Civil or Industrial Engineering as soon as he was able to take regular classes.

In his nuclear family, Hamoodei has two elder sisters and one elder brother who live in Qatar. His father is working on a doctorate in Arabic language in England, and in Qatar he is director of a library and a poet. His mother now works as a beauty advisor, although she did not work when her children were young. Hamoodei has extended family in the United States, but not in Oregon. During his first half year in Portland, he lived with a friend and the friend's wife, but has since gotten an apartment alone, an American driver's license and a new car.

Hamoodei had not experienced peer response groups in a classroom situation although he often shared parts of his papers with his friends. He anticipated that having peers read his writing would be "no problem" for him, and indicated he did not feel any particular emotion about having others read what he had read.

Writing Background. Hamoodei remembers learning to write Arabic in Qatar by copying letters from books onto paper. First, children learned to pronounced words, then they learned to write them from memory. There were about fifty boys in Hamoodei's beginning classes, which were at a private school. These classes were unusually large, and after four years his parents moved him to a public school, where average class size was around thirty. He began English at age five. He remembers concentrating on reading and writing in first to third grade, and then starting with literature, poetry, and reading books in fourth grade. For punishment, students had to stand facing the wall, and for more serious offenses they were expelled from class for several days. Hamoodei had graduated

from high school, but was unable to study engineering in Qatar so his father had sent him to the United States.

Approach to Writing. Hamoodei likes to write in Arabic when he is "in the mood." He finds Arabic easier than English, because in English "it is hard to give examples." When he has to write a paper in English, he usually starts writing directly without any written preparation, stops, rereads what he has written, and then continues writing. The hardest thing about writing for him is "getting started," and he often agonizes over the introduction and gives it to his friends to read before he continues with the paper.

One reason he gave for hating ESOL was that "they make you read when you do not feel like reading, and write when you do not feel like writing." His first essay, advice to a friend from Qatar coming to the United States, focused around the need "never to depend on somebody in doing your things" as in Qatar, because the people here "would never understand how important it is for you.".

Encounter with Peer Response Groups. After participating in the first and second sessions of peer response groups, Hamoodei "enjoyed the experience." He "mostly listened" when the other students were reading, and then thought about what to tell them after they were finished. What to tell them "just seemed obvious to me, like a lack of details, for example." He preferred not to comment on mechanical errors, because, "I feel that they will find these small things on their own, as they rewrite their papers."

He liked the experience of reading his own writing aloud for two reasons: first because he could find some mistakes that he had

not found while reading it silently, and second because "I can read it like I want, and change things if I need to." This occurrence was described previously in Group 4 of the peer response group section.

He did not think he spoke more with some students about their essays than others. When asked about Eri, who had said very little in his group, he explained that some students "didn't say·much, because they might feel uncomfortable or something," and that they had no obligation to.

During one peer response group, Nicolae questioned Hamoodei's sentence, "Because of the importancy of the the place student wants to study in, it's important to choose a suitable univerty or colleg meet. . . " Hamoodei turned to Kurt and asked: "Can I? Can I write like this?". Kurt looked at the sentence and told Hamoodei "because of the importance with an "e," no double "the," that meets, "e" on the end of college." This sentence reappeared as follows: "Because of the importance of the place to students who want to study, it's impotntant to choose a suitable universty or college tha meets. . ."

Hamoodei's general first impression of the peer response groups was favorable. He found them "interesting and helpful" and did not feel intimidated or uncomfortable with the experience. He liked hearing other students' opinions and comments about his writing, and liked responding after they read.

<u>Effects of a Peer Response Group on Hamoodei's Second Draft.</u>
Hamoodei was receptive to his peers' advice while writing a second draft of his essay. He mentioned the tuition, which he had been reluctant to do before their advice, and he added a new paragraph

full of statistics and numbers. The second draft was considerably longer and the one sentence conclusion had become a paragraph. Kurt gave Hamoodei's first and second drafts both the evaluation of "√," but the second certainly appeared no worse than the first. One factor could have been Hamoodei's handwriting while writing English, which was extremely difficult for many people to read.

When asked if the new paragraph was a deliberate response to Nicolae's suggestion to add details, Hamoodei said he was not sure, that the new ideas "just came to me while I was rewriting."

Reflection on the Peer Response Groups. At the end of the term, Hamoodei found the most valuable part of the peer response groups to be that "you can see if you're missing something in your paper. If everyone else is writing about something, and it's not in your paper, you can put it in." He thought that sometimes reading the papers took a lot of time, but that it "wasn't boring." In his opinion, it was a good activity for ESOL teachers to use in the writing classroom.

Reflection on the Class. Overall Hamoodei "liked the writing class," and believed he had improved his English." He enjoyed the group work in the class very much. He found the instructor to be "different from all the other ESOL teachers," and added that the class was "not so much work, except at the end." He qualified this by saying that "if I hadn't taken the [same level] class last term, it would have been more difficult, because I already knew how to make a bibliography, for example, for the term paper."

The previous term had been difficult for him: "I knew I wasn't going to pass, so I just stopped coming to class. This term I really decided to do well. I came to class regularly and did all the things." Generally, morning classes in the United States were very difficult for Hamoodei. "I do all of my work at night, so it's difficult for me to get up. An ideal schedule for me is classes at eleven, and at one. I can't keep this up for a long time." ("This" meant getting up at nine to be in class by ten). Hamoodei attended the reading class taught by the same teacher the hour before the writing class, and yet he was often late. "The reading class is in one building, and the writing class is in another. In order to get there, you have to go through all the buildings, and the cafeteria. It's impossible not to see someone you know. So that's why I'm, sometimes, a little late. But the teacher is sometimes a few minutes late too," he added. He was exceptionally late to one class, and a later conversation revealed that he and his new car had received a ticket for traveling at ninety miles an hour on the freeway, and he had had to go to court.

Hamoodei chose to do his final paper on the history and present day situation of the Palestinian people, and he titled it "The Reason to Live." It was generally an informative paper, but it ended with the statement that the Palestinians would defend the Intifada ("an organized, unified, Palestinian uprising") "until their last hero has died." At eight and one half pages, it was the second longest paper in the class and it received a "B" grade. As did all of the students who completed the course, Hamoodei received an "A" in this ESOL

writing class, and expects to have authorization to begin studies in Civil or Industrial Engineering soon.

Eri

Cultural and Personal Information. Eri is a nineteen-year-old student from Japan, and had been in the United States four years and three months at the beginning of the class. The instructor identified her as being in the middle of the class in respect to her writing ability. Her reason for taking advanced ESOL writing was to raise her TOEFL score to what the university required for regular classes. She was also taking advanced ESOL Grammar, Reading and Speaking/Listening. Her parents had come to the United States on business four years earlier, and she and her brother attended high school in Oregon. Her father is a businessman and her mother manages their household. Her parents have returned to Japan, but according to their wishes she and her brother are continuing their education in the U.S. They are living with different American families. She would have preferred studying in Japan.

Writing Background. There were forty-three students in Eri's co-educational elementary school class. She remembers learning to write in Japanese in these classes by copying from books onto paper. Her friends helped her frequently at school with writing and other subjects, as she helped them. She liked writing informally in Japanese, but disliked formal writing. When students made errors in writing, she remembered teachers hitting them on the head or hands, or making them sit on the floor. She began learning English while

she was in seventh grade. She liked writing in English, but did not like to have to think about her writing.

Approach to Writing. When Eri prepares to write, she first writes in Japanese, then translates this into English. When the translation is complete, she considers her writing finished. When she writes in English, the most important consideration for her is that the grammar be correct. She does not show her writing to anyone before turning it in.

She had participated in peer response groups both in Japan and in her American high school. She "hated it" in both of these situations and did not expect to feel any differently in this class. She felt this way because "I am not a good writer and I feel ashamed to have people read my writing." She thought that only the instructor should see her work. Although she would accept having strangers read it, she was not comfortable having friends and classmates comment on her writing. Her first essay, advice to a friend from Japan coming to the United States, emphasized being independent because "in America, most of the students do not act in a group all day long."

Encounter with Peer Response Groups. After participating in the peer response groups in this class, Eri did not like them any better than she had previously liked them in the American high school. She listened to the other students while they read, and then tried to think of something to say. She found this difficult, and usually tried to find something "in the grammar of the paper" to comment on.

Eri did not like reading her writing aloud. She felt vulnerable and "embarrassed." When it was her turn, she spoke quickly and softly, "trying to finish." Eri was aware that she had made more comments to Dao in her group than she had to Nicolae and Hamoodei. She was not sure if this had to do with gender, or if it was because she and Dao were better friends. She liked other group activities, but in peer response groups, she felt all the attention "focused on myself." She would have preferred that the instructor do all of the evaluation of the writing himself.

Effects of a Peer Response Group on Eri's Second Draft. Eri did not appear to be receptive to the advice of her peers. In the second draft, she changed "bus" in the sentence "students usually use bus" to "busses" and "I haven chose" to "I have chose," but did not respond to Dao's suggestion that she try to vary her phrases. She and Nicolae had written about the same university and had been in the same group when discussing this essay. A sentence in Nicolae's first draft, comparing Rice with other universities, reappeared at the end of a sentence which had been in Eri's first draft. Although the differences between the first and second drafts appeared to be minor, the first received a "√" and the second received "++."

Reflection on the Peer Response Groups. Eri's dislike of peer response groups was modified somewhat by the end of the term. She did not like reading aloud nor having people "put her on the spot" in a group reading activity; however, she qualified this by saying that it was "fun to look at the different papers, and see the different ways that people write." Eri felt complimented by Dao's comment that her

writing was "clear and simple," and easy to understand. She suggested that rather than reading aloud, the groups read the papers silently and pass them around, writing their comments at the bottom. This would be "less uncomfortable."

Reflection on the Class. At the end of the term, Eri had "enjoyed the writing class," although she could not say if her English had improved or not. She had enjoyed some of the activities and thought the instructor "was funny."

She chose to write her final paper on "Abortion." It was an informative paper about pregnancy and how abortions are performed in hospitals, and it ended with the message that women are different and unique, and that "nobody has a right to say" whether they should have an abortion or not. The paper was about four and one half pages long and received a "B" grade. As did all of the students who completed the course, Eri received an "A," and plans to begin some regular classes, perhaps in Business, next term.

Dao

Cultural and Personal Information. Dao is a twenty-four-year old student from Thailand, and had been in the United States four months at the beginning of the class. She was identified by the instructor as one of the stronger writers in the class. Her reason for being in advanced ESOL writing class was that the ESOL program coordinator had suggested that this course would improve her grammar and writing skills. She holds a Bachelor's Degree from Thailand in English with a minor in Advertising, and her goal in the

United States is to complete a Master's program in Speech Communications. While taking this writing class, she was also taking a non-ESOL writing class, a Speech Communications class, and advanced ESOL Grammar.

Dao is the eldest child in her family: she has two younger sisters. Her parents are gardeners, and have a large greenhouse full of various flowers, including lotus and orchids. None of her family has been in the United States. She lives in a small apartment by herself. The most important thing in her life at this time is to complete her Master's as quickly as possible and return to Thailand.

Writing Background. Dao remembers first learning to write in Thai by imitating a teacher's writing on a blackboard in her hometown near Bangkok. There were about fifteen students in her co-educational class. She does not remember any punishment given in the classroom, but she does remember having to perform at the chalkboard in front of the other children, and feeling very shy about it. She began learning to speak and write English when she was ten.

Approach to Writing. Dao likes to write. It is not difficult for her, and she finds writing in the Thai language very "tasty, because of the slang." She enjoys writing in English even more than in Thai, because it is a challenge for her. English is "unpredictable, and there are more styles, it's not monotone." When she writes an academic paper, she goes to sources of information, then makes an outline, then writes a rough draft, then edits this draft, and rewrites it again. This is the paper she turns in. When she writes, she always "puts in question marks, and then puts the answer later

so the reader will try to follow" her writing. She also tries to add her feelings, "so the readers will feel familiar with me."

Sometimes her friends and family read her writing in Thailand, but she had never shared her writing in a classroom. She anticipated that it would be "good to have comment" on her writing, although she also felt "a little shy." Her first essay, advice to a Thai friend coming to Oregon, reflects concerns about the high cost of living and studying here as she told the person to "have a large amount of money" because "here, every machine goes by money."

Encounter with Peer Response Groups. Dao enjoyed the peer response group meetings. While the other students were reading their papers, she listened, read along with them quietly, and made a mark whenever she saw something she wanted to comment on. She felt that her cultural background played a role in what she would choose to say to the other students. "In my country, it is not good to remind people of something, because it could discourage them. I tried to choose ways to encourage them, and if the person were in a good mood I would add a small comment." In one case, she told me that she had felt that one part of a peer's paper should be "more clarified," although she had not mentioned it. "Maybe he will find it later."

Effects of a Peer Response Group on Dao's Second Draft. Dao was receptive to the comments of her peers. Hamoodei and Nicolae advised her to add details and numbers to her essay, and to make it less personal. For the second draft, she wrote a new essay, using a more formal voice and added many details.

"My purpose," she said, "in writing became completely different. In the first essay, I was talking about my own feelings. But then I realized that they wanted to be persuaded, so I changed the paper to fit the purpose." Hamoodei had advised Dao to add "more numbers" to the paper, but she did not add more numbers, only new details. She explained that she had taken Hamoodei's advice "as a clue." She did not want to add more numbers because "it would be dull, like a scientific paper." She would not change anything "if it affects my style," and only took the advice "if it made sense." When made aware that Eri had not incorporated the changes she had suggested, she replied "this is individual style."

Dao was the only student of the three who had attended class during the third session of peer response groups, and responded to Nicolae's and Wendi's papers giving advice to someone traveling to their country. Nicolae was surprised by her description of a hot, sticky country (Dao: "In my country we have three seasons. Hot, very hot, and very very hot!" Nicolae: "OOOOO!"). Wendi, from Indonesia, suggested that Dao's warning about mosquitoes was not important. Nicolae argued that it was important information, and needed to remain. When Dao was asked later if she would change the mosquito warning in a second draft, she said, emphatically, "NO." When asked if she would have changed it without Nicolae's protests, Dao replied, "No, it will stay. It will stay. Maybe I would change the exact words, but it will stay." Dao had definite ideas about what she wanted to write, and how she would write it.

Reflection of Peer Response Groups. In retrospect, Dao liked sharing her writing with the other students, and stated "that sharing my papers with the others always brings back to me my own improvement of writing skill." She liked reading aloud, and "looking at my paper from other students' point of view."

She thought that some students took criticism better than others because they were more mature, so she responded more to them. She had made a decision never to comment on Sidik's writing, because "he is less mature than the others." She felt more comfortable talking about writing with females, or males considerably older than herself such as Nicolae, but not with males her own age.

Reflection on the Class. Looking back at the class, Dao said that she had "loved it." She found it to be easy-going, not stressful, and she liked the chances it gave her to write. She liked having a teacher to "guide and grade the writing," because "I always appreciate my own words," and she was glad to have been "forced to write." Sometimes she felt frustrated because she had not always seen the point in the "games" that the class had participated in, such as "Password," an activity where pairs try to guess each other's vocabulary words. She felt that the instructor should have mentioned their purpose, because otherwise it was "just a game, and I did not take it seriously."

Dao wrote her final paper on flowers, divided into sections such as "flowers as herbs," "the language of flowers." Its title was "Live the Flower Life" and it was about five pages long. It was an

informative paper, but it ended with a persuasive message to "enrich the world and every human heart with flowers." This paper received an "A" grade. Dao received an "A" in this class, as did all of the students who completed the course, and she will continue with studies in Speech Communications after this term.

Hamoodei, Eri, and Dao: Comparisons and Contrasts

Eri and Hamoodei had begun school in large classes, whereas Dao's classes had been much smaller. As children, Eri was hit when she made a mistake in writing, and Hamoodei was also punished. Dao was not. Hamoodei began English when he was five, Dao when she was ten and Eri when she was thirteen. Dao and Hamoodei occasionally shared their writing with their friends, whereas Eri did not. All liked to write informally, but Dao also liked formal writing in English and in Thai. Eri and Hamoodei were in the writing class because they had not received the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score that the university demanded, whereas Dao had done this already and was there to improve her writing. Dao and Hamoodei considered their writing ability to be good, but Eri thought she was a bad writer.

Eri had one sibling, Dao two, and Hamoodei three. Eri and Dao had grown up studying in co-educational classrooms, whereas Hamoodei went to school with only males. All of their fathers had sent them to the U.S. to study. Dao had been in Oregon four months, and Hamoodei one year: both lived alone. Eri had lived in the U.S. for four years, and she lived with a family. She was the only one who

had participated in peer response groups previously, and she had found them unpleasant. Hamoodei and Eri both disliked ESOL, but Dao liked it because she was interested in language.

Hamoodei wrote quickly in English, without planning, and then revised. Dao planned carefully in English, then wrote, and then revised. Eri wrote first in Japanese, translated, and with this her writing was complete.

Hamoodei and Dao were both receptive to the peer group's feedback, and they changed their second drafts considerably as a result of it. Dao would change something as a result of a peer's advice "if it matches my style," and Hamoodei would also "if it makes sense." Eri was uncomfortable while in the groups, especially in the role of writer, and she made few changes in the second draft as a result of her peer's feedback, as she found it "all right" as it was written.

At the term's end, Dao and Hamoodei had both found the peer response groups useful, and they would want to experience them again. Eri, on the other hand, had disliked them as much as she had previously, and if she repeated the class, she would not want to repeat the peer response groups.

AN ESOL WRITING INSTRUCTOR'S APPROACH, DESIGN, AND PROCEDURE

This section of the results includes information from interviews with the ESOL writing instructor as well as a summary of activities and observations in the writing class.

Personal Information

Kurt had been teaching ESOL for fifteen years, seven of which had been spent teaching ESOL writing classes. On the first day of class, he introduced himself to the students, and told them that he had a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy, a Master's degree in TESOL, had taught ESOL in Japan, was married to a Japanese woman and had three sons. He is a middle-aged male originally from the Midwest of the United States.

The ESOL Instructor's Approach and Design in Relation to the Peer Response Group Activity

Kurt first heard of peer response groups in a journal article in 1986, and experimented with them in his ESOL classes, hoping to find a pedagogical tool for working with students who are often "marginally motivated and have high affective filters." He defined an ideal peer response group as one where "other people are giving the writer new insights, an evaluation, showing logical fallacies, editing, and proofreading for grammar." Kurt does not believe that the peer response groups in his previous classes succeeded in doing all of this; in fact, in the past, he found that the students were unable to give each other much help with grammar and he often found their comments about each other's writing to be "minimal." He has nevertheless continued using peer response groups as an activity in his writing classes because of the belief that "students learn to write from theory, practice and reflection, and peer response groups

are part of this paradigm." Another reason that he continues using them is his approval of the interaction that it causes between students. "It makes them talk, whether they can criticize each other or not. Maybe the only thing to expect is a sharing of ideas." When forming groups, he intentionally puts males and females and students from different cultures together to facilitate interaction among students from diverse backgrounds.

Kurt believes that trust and familiarity play a major role in the peer response group process. Especially during the first month of class, he incorporates frequent "fun and interesting" group and pair activities into his classroom to facilitate interaction between students. He thinks that good instructors should try to like and help their students and be as non-threatening as possible, and through his own behavior as an instructor he tries to convince his students of this. For this reason he does not insist that the students sit in a circle, but instead lets them choose their own places in the class.

In the past, Kurt has given the students direct content-based questions about their peers' writing to help focus their comments during peer response groups, and occasionally he has them do a second form-based evaluation. When I interviewed Kurt during the first week of class, he was optimistic about using peer response groups with this particular class. "It's hard to know how it will turn out, but there are five talkative students, which is helpful, and some of them are good writers." Writing through practice and reflection, promoting interaction, encouraging relationships between diverse people, building trust in the classroom and facilitating fun and

interesting activities form Kurt's approach to teaching writing, and shape the design of his writing class.

The Instructor's Reflections on Peer Response Groups in this Class

Kurt felt very positive about the peer response groups that had occurred in this particular class. He was pleased that the students appeared to be interacting in a friendly manner. He found the "greatly improved" second draft of a paper the students had written mid-way through the term as evidence of a positive effect of the peer groups. He noted that the Middle Eastern students had "seemed to like the groups," and that the Japanese women "may not have," based on how little they had participated, although he did not want to make any assumptions.

As well as peer response groups, the students had done other group activities together and written about the information acquired in them. Kurt explained, "I not only want the students to write, but I want to give them something to write about. They need to have some kind of experience in order for their writing to be 'real.'" He again found the students unable to help each other much with editing, but continued to be convinced that having students share their writing content with each other was a useful activity for ESOL writing classrooms.

Observations: Class Procedures

Trust, Familiarity, Interaction and Interesting Activities.

Creating trust and familiarity, facilitating interaction between

students and organizing interesting activities for them were components that Kurt identified as his main approach and design for this course. Trust between people, if it develops, comes from experiences that they have together. At any one time in this class, activities could be broken into three categories: lecture, open discussion, or group/pair work. During the lecture, Kurt spoke and the students listened and took notes. During the open discussions, Kurt asked questions or proposed topics for the class to discuss as a whole. During the group/pair work, the students were given a task, and then divided into pairs or groups. As cited earlier, students spent a total of 42% of their time in this class working in groups and pairs.

Kurt believed that familiarity among students could develop through group activities, and that it was aided by a non-threatening atmosphere. In his class, Kurt included opinions and analogies related to sex, religion, politics and other instructors in his lectures, and used profanity in the class. This seemed to interest the younger and less reserved students in the class, and to help them feel comfortable expressing similar opinions and using informal language in Kurt's classroom. (Examples: First class: "This book [The Handmaid's Tale] is not kind to Christians. Of course, neither am I." Third class: "If you're going to have sex, will you do a good or a bad job? A good job, right? Why not. So, if you're going to write, you might as well . . . --" Sidik and Yasu continue " . . . do a good job." Twenty-first class: Student: "She was an asshole." Kurt: "Why was she an asshole?" Thirtieth class, on the subject of refugee camps:

"They teach them 'please' and 'thank you,' but not how to complain. They are trying to make good little Americans out of immigrants.")

Kurt asked the students to call him by his first name. He did not order their books through the campus bookstore, but rather told them to go to a private bookstore where they would be less expensive. He often facilitated group activities and then asked the students to write about some aspect of that experience. During some group activities, the students formed pairs or groups and Kurt played rock music as they interacted.

Sample lecture topics that Kurt spoke on were: 1) Learning to write through writing and reading; 2) Brainstorming; 3) Doing research; 4) Writing styles (narrative, comparison, etc); and 5) Writing bibliographies. Sample group and pair activities that Kurt facilitated in the class were: 1) Two truths and a lie; 2) Describe-Interpret-Evaluate; 3) Turpania; 4) Password; 5) Discussion of reading material; 6) Group writing; and 7) Peer response groups.

Evaluation of Students. Kurt explained that students' grades would be based on attendance, participation, homework, essays, dialogue journals and a final paper. He used symbols for evaluating student writing, given from low to high: "-; $\sqrt{}$; +; and ++." He did this because he believed that all evaluation was inherently subjective. He did not attempt to use a number system, but rather gave grades based on the students' daily attendance, their participation, which he made a mental note of, and the completion of satisfactory assignments. He did give their term papers letter grades. He liked to try and give students the highest grade possible

in relation to the above factors. Although this is not always the case, the nine students who completed the course and the assignments this term all received the grade of "A," and one student who did not complete the course received an "F."

A Typical Day in this Instructor's Class. Class begins when Kurt, wearing jeans and a cotton shirt, enters and seats himself on the table in front of the room. The students are in rows: Eri, Kazuko and Yasu are sitting at the back of the room; Ling, Wendi and Dao toward the middle; and Nicolae is at the front of the class. Kurt indicates that they are to discuss Hemingway, and asks an open question. When no one answers, he asks Ling what she thought of Hemingway. She finds him boring.

Sidik enters at five past and sits in the front. Kurt begins to define modernism in American literature, and as an example he describes the dark and light imagery from "A Clean Well-Lit Place" and compares it with the statue Portlandia in Portland, Oregon. He returns to Hemingway and asks "What does macho mean?" Yasu replies, "powerful, a stud." Kurt says "Um hum." He describes Hemingway's life during the Spanish Civil War, and mentions his suicide in Sun Valley. Hamoodei enters at a quarter past and sits in the back.

Kurt describes growing up in Illinois and hunting rabbits, as one of the characters in the assigned story does (see Hemingway, 1980). This leads into a story about a fishing experience he had on a river in Oregon. Then he returns to the reading, and asks them, as international students, what they thought of the story. Wendi says

he is as confused by Celsius and Fahrenheit conversion as the character in the story is. Kurt describes living in Japan and having to use a calculator to see if it was necessary to contact a doctor when his children were ill. Several of the students laugh or smile. Wendi adds that the weather report here is also difficult for him to understand.

Kurt asks for a definition of "ethnocentricity." Sidik offers "fixed in one culture." Wendi says "You think your culture is best." Kurt says "Yes, that your people's way is the best way to do something." Eri and Kazuko speak quietly in Japanese. Kurt describes his boss in Japan thinking Americans could not drive stick-shifts, and not loaning him a car when he should have as an example of ethnocentricity. Yasu, Wendi, Sidik and Hamoodei, the young males, begin to discuss the merits and drawbacks of manual and automatic transmission. Sidik and Hamoodei disagree and switch into Arabic. Eri tells Kurt that knowing her weight is difficult here because she is used to kilograms. Eri and Kazuko speak quietly in Japanese, and Kurt tells the class that he wants them to write a reaction to Hemingway's story. He puts the students into groups by calling their names and pointing to a side of the room: Kazuko, Ling, Sidik; Eri, Yasu, Nicolae; Wendi, Dao, and Hamoodei. The students rearrange their chairs into circles. Ling, Nicolae, and Dao are writing for their groups. Ling begins to write immediately as Kazuko and Sidik look on. Nicolae and Dao both discuss the story with other group members before they begin to write. Each group passes the writing around their group. Wendi, Dao and Hamoodei

discuss what Dao has written; the other students begin to put away their things. Kurt collects their group reactions, makes a reading assignment for the next day, and class is finished.

THE ESOL WRITING INSTRUCTOR COMMUNITY

Surveys were sent to ESOL writing instructors in twelve academic ESOL programs in the same geographic area as the instructor I observed. Forty surveys from ten of these institutions were completed.

Forty instructors had taught ESOL for an average of eleven years, and thirty-eight of them had taught writing for an average of eight years. All instructors identified a typical writing student of theirs to be a university/college bound adult in academic ESOL courses. All forty instructors had heard of peer response groups. Twenty-four of them had heard of peer response groups an average of seven years ago. Many of the instructors had learned of peer response groups from writing colleagues, in TESOL methods classes, at conferences and at writing workshops.

Thirty-four instructors (85%) had used peer response groups in the ESOL classroom at least once, and six (15%) replied that they had not. Twenty-two instructors (55%) use peer response groups on a regular basis; three (7%) use peer response groups "sometimes"; and fifteen (36%) do not use peer response groups in the ESOL writing classroom.

Fourteen of twenty-two instructors use peer response groups to improve content of writing; sixteen of twenty-two instructors use peer response groups to improve form; and nineteen of twenty-two instructors use them to facilitate communication between the students. Other reasons that instructors use peer response groups include providing students with an audience, helping them share ideas, helping them identify mistakes and grammar problems, helping them develop self-confidence about their writing, and putting them in a teacher's role.

Of the twenty-two instructors who use peer response groups regularly in the classroom: more have students read their writing silently than aloud (six to ten); half have their students bring copies of their writing for peers (ten to ten); most have them write several drafts of their writing (fifteen to five); most do not have oral conferences with their students (one to seven); and all but three make the final evaluations of the students' papers.

Seventeen, or 43% of the twenty-two instructors who use peer response groups regularly in the classroom find them useful. Of the eighteen instructors who do not use peer response groups in the classroom or use them only sometimes, five find them useful. The reasons that some instructors found peer response groups useful in the ESOL writing classroom were divided into three categories: reasons concerning the content of writing (four instructors); reasons concerning form or mechanics (two instructors), and reasons outside of the immediate writing task (five instructors). A typical reason involving content was "they raise students'

awareness of content, and help students to look at own papers in a more analytical way." A typical reason involving form was " to help students see grammar mistakes." Typical reasons outside of the writing task were: "they are useful for preparing students for regular English classes;" "they help students become more self reliant;" "they are interactive," "they are effective with students from different cultures;" and "they save the teacher time."

Reasons that instructors did not find peer response groups useful in the ESOL writing classroom were also divided into three categories: reasons concerning students' interaction with one another; reasons concerning individual students; and reasons concerning the activity. Typical reasons concerning students' interaction with one another include: "students are resistant to suggestions from peers;" "students of different levels have trouble working together;" "students have a hard time criticizing each other;" "students do not respect each other's opinions;" and "success depends on a particular combination of students." Typical reasons concerning individual students include: "students are not qualified to give good evaluations;" "weak students do not give quality feedback;" "low levels get hung up on mechanics;" "students feel it is a waste of time;" and "students only want teacher feedback." Several responses indicated concerns about the activity itself. Instructors responded that peer response groups "consume tremendous amounts of time," and one instructor believed that "they are used by teachers to avoid work for themselves."

Of the forty instructors, eighteen (47%) had participated in a response group as "non-teachers," and twenty two (53%) had not. Of those teachers who found peer response groups useful and used them regularly, thirteen (59%) had participated in groups as "non-teachers" or peers, and nine (41%) had not. Of the teachers who did not use peer response groups regularly and did not find them useful, six (33%) had participated in such groups as peers, and twelve (67%) had not.

The instructors who used peer response groups on a regular basis and found them useful had been teaching for an average of 9.7 years, whereas the instructors who did not had been teaching for an average of 6.3 years.

WRITING, SHARING AND RESPONDING THROUGH A PARTICIPANT'S EYES

Beginnings

The upper division required writing class in which I participated as a student writer included four students whose first language was English, and twenty-four whose first language was not. The students were mostly Vietnamese-American, with some international students from Taiwan, China, Japan, and Turkey. The four students mentioned above, of which I was one, were European-Americans.

The professor, Goethe, entered and called the roll, reading names such as "Nguyen Hoa" without difficulty. He generally wore jeans and a cotton shirt. Goethe explained that we would spend most

of the term in groups discussing our writing. He explained his belief that "writing is interactive, and having a real audience is the best way to progress. He emphasized "our responsibility to our groups," and that "no one of us was an authority." He wanted our classmates to become our friends. Writing for our friends would help us "learn by doing," and those who "put more into the groups would get more out of them." He mentioned two grades he gave, "A"s for those who participate, and "F"s for those who do not attend class. He told us where to buy the textbook more cheaply than at the campus bookstore.

In the following class, Goethe asked us if we could write. Many of us shook our heads negatively. He described a child who wrote the word "cat" in this manner: "XO," and then he asked what "XOXO" meant. After someone volunteered "cats," Goethe asked us if this child could write, and when answered affirmatively, asked us, "How is it possible that we say children can write, and we say that we can't?" His stated goal was to help us say that we could write again.

Goethe drew a map of the neighborhood where he grew up on the board while describing experiences of this time. We were asked to do the same on a piece of paper, and then share it with someone. I drew a map of the forest where I used to ride my horse, and the person next to me drew a map of his old neighborhood near Saigon and described how he would take fruit from nearby trees, just for the adventure. Goethe asked us to put ourselves into groups, and to think about seeking difference in gender and first language.

I began worrying about what I would write. I listed ten potential topics, as Goethe suggested ("Sometimes it's easier to think of ten things to write about than one"). My group was made up of three females and two males: three were Vietnamese-American, one was an international student from Indonesia, and I was the fifth member.

When the meeting time came I waited nervously, twice mistaking women for group members when they were not. I had written about a childhood experience my forest map had reminded me of. Getting ready to read, I felt terribly exposed. We continued, and one of my group members read an essay far riskier than mine, comparing details of her life to a painting of a man struggling in a rowboat surrounded by sharks. Another group member later confided that she had felt like crying while hearing the essay, and I had felt the same. I was impressed by the courage of this woman. I had begun the group meeting wishing I had not risked so much, and ended it with the intention of risking more.

Goethe almost always began the one class a week we had together by reading to us. He used the reading to underline the importance of noticing things. He took a poll of how many books we read for pleasure in a term, and suggested that we didn't seem to be reading enough. It was necessary for us to read in order to write, Goethe explained. He also asked us how many poets we knew, and then helped us to write free verse about our names. When he asked us how many poets we knew again, our answer was twenty eight. Another thing Goethe suggested we do was try and remember our

dreams, and to keep a log of them if we wished. He also encouraged us to drop the five paragraph essay form that many of us were following, unless it really seemed to fit what we wanted to say.

Privately, Goethe suggested some measures of some effects of peer response groups that were not readily visible: 1) sincerity of the writing; 2) willingness to share; 3) buying a journal after the class; 4) a writer's voice moving from a communicative style to a poetic; and 5) the class becoming a community. In class, Goethe discussed the feedback he wanted us to be giving each other, saying that it would vary with how well people know each other. He summarized: "If the reader has a problem reading, then you need to help the reader." Goethe met with our group that week, also bringing a piece of writing and sharing it with us. He encouraged us to talk about the content of the writing and "how we had felt while hearing it," and not to devote our time to discussion about tense or grammar.

One of my pieces was about meeting my husband, and my group members teased me about the "large brown eyes" that kept appearing in the essay. I began to feel as though we were getting to know each other. A group member stated that he found it "more exciting to read in groups -- we stop to joke with each other." Another member told me that she often read our writing aloud to her boyfriend.

Sharing and Responding to Writing

Mid-way through the term, we were asked to turn in three pieces that we had written for Goethe to read and give us feedback on. We also met as a class, bringing twenty-eight copies of one

piece, and while sitting in a circle, we read one piece that we had written aloud while the others read along. My group had found it very interesting and exciting to listen to all of the essays, and to imagine what kind of essay the next person would read. A class member shared that she had felt nervous until the moment she began to read aloud, and then her feeling disappeared. This was similar to my every-day experience in my group: I would sweat and shiver until it was my turn to read, and then all of my fear would vanish when I began.

The "read-around" experience seemed to be a turning point for many students in the class. Two students shared that as they wrote more, they felt their writing and their grammar were improving. Others felt that it had been interesting to compare their peers' ideas and styles. Another said that with this freedom to write about anything she wanted, she was beginning to feel more motivation to write. The group meetings were causing me to feel this also. I remembered a dead person I had found once in the woods, and retold this story. I began to feel success when I could make my group members laugh or empathize with what I wrote.

At one point in the term, I read some writing aloud to someone outside the class, and soon missed the laughter and um-hums and uh-ohs from my group. When I took it to my group, these things returned, and I felt my confidence return as well. "How interesting that in a few weeks this group of what were strangers could give me a confidence that others who have known me much longer did not," I wrote. When I shared the experience with Goethe, he told me that

the difference was reading my writing to people who are also writing, and in a better position to react to it.

One group member shared that she had always hated writing, but that she was "getting used to writing through free writing." Someone in the class found the subjects people chose interesting -- "most people write to tell you something, but here students share their feelings and their thoughts." "We use no composition forms," wrote one of my group members, triumphantly. "We start and stop with each thought. The language is so powerful, it brings all into the mood, and reflects everything. We are like a small poet society." I also felt like this. I was spending an inordinate amount of time thinking about my writing, wondering what the effects certain topics would be, or what else I was ready to share. The group meetings were often the emotional highlights of my week. Another group member told me that the group would lift her from depression with the joy she experienced from sharing writing and being read to.

Some of the post-ESOL students reflected on what we were doing. One stated that "as Michael Jordan's mission was basketball," his had become writing. Another spoke of struggling with writing for her group as "building the foundation of my house of writing." A Chinese student shared a proverb about her writing: "To grow a tree, sow the seed now. I am now sowing the seed." I was interested to find that one day my writing would seem poor, while other group members' writing seemed so good -- and then the next day, the tables would turn. Two other students remarked in class how they had also not expected to find that their peers had similar problems

when writing, as they thought it was simply because they were "bad writers."

I mailed copies of my pieces that seemed especially successful to my friends, something I had never done before. My list of ten topics was exhausted, and a list of one hundred took their place. To be honest, our group was not ideal. Group members were sometimes late, or would put little time into their writing. Others, however, would make it obvious that they were working hard, despite the fact that we were the only ones to see their writing and that it had no effect on their grade. My earlier map partner was such a person: he was never absent, and he put a lot of time into his writing. He shared the name his mother called him with our group, something like "quizzical young old man."

Closure

At the beginning of the group, we had all written only about the recent past and things that had happened to us in Oregon. Toward the end of the term, I noticed that the other group members began to bring some poetry, and the Indonesian student began to write about experiences in Indonesia. The three Vietnamese-Americans also began to share experiences of their childhood in Vietnam, and some painful encounters they had had as they entered American high schools as ESOL students with few insights into American culture. Goethe had explained that as we wrote more and became more intimate, our writing would begin to move from a communicative style toward more expressive and poetic writing. This seemed to be

true for us. I found myself writing poems and sharing some of my own painful experiences from growing up, sometimes to play with the language, but more often with the goal of trying to thank these people for all that they were sharing with me.

In my journal, I wondered if there were a sort of "nuclear English" -- a core English that everyone could understand, one that transcended grammar. "I understand my group member's poetry even though I would never write such sentences ('You're so quiet like other thousand time')." I felt as if I finally no longer saw my group's writing from an ESOL instructor's perspective, as I had at first when problems of form had distracted me, but rather as a friend who was interested in its message alone.

At one point, we discussed the subject of homosexuality, which had come up in a group member's essay. Three of us found it natural and acceptable, and two group members disagreed. We all felt strongly about our opinions, and our discussion was heated. In another situation, this might have made further sharing impossible, but the friendship that had developed between us was strong enough that we finally agreed to disagree. The laughter and support at the next meeting assured me that despite our differences, our friendships were intact.

As final exam time approached, I wrote, "We are all sad to be ending this experience. We know each other quite well in ways that our best friends may not know us -- about the separation of one member's parents, another's experience at outdoor school and why a third had graduated barefoot . . . " Other students in the class felt

similarly. One shared, "I didn't think this was a good idea at first, but now I do. I have never had an opportunity to express what I thought -- this class changed my attitude about writing." Another stated that of "two hundred credits needed for my graduation, this class was my favorite."

The "quizzical young old man" and I both intend to participate in such a group again whenever we can. I wrote, "Despite the sadness of not meeting again, I feel much more confidence and interest in trying to write about some of the things in my head, in writing expressively, and in my ability to reach people through words when I work at it than before this experience." Another student told Goethe, "This class had improved my thinking, because of the quality time I had to write freely. Maybe, this spring break, instead of watching television, I'll read a book."

We were asked to turn in three more pieces for Goethe's feedback; during the term, we had written sixteen essays. On the last day of class, we had another "read-around," as in the middle of the term, and the essay Goethe had written for this one recounted some experiences he had had in our groups over the term. The "quizzical young old man" summarized his feelings about the class in a letter to Goethe he shared with our group, which concluded, "This had been a very joyful, amusing, and pleasant class that has built my confidence about writing. I just wish it wasn't ending. Thank you, Sir. Thank you." I believe his words spoke for many students who participated in the class, and I send my sincere thanks with his.

Intercultural Encounters

My intent was to take an English class whose instructor used peer response groups to compare with the ESOL class I observed. This upper division required writing class was not a class full of students whose first language was English, as I had somewhat naively assumed it would be. Twenty-four of twenty-eight (86%) of the students enrolled had gone through ESOL classes in the U.S. or abroad, and spoke English as an additional language. My first reaction was disappointment, as I wondered how I could compare this class with the ESOL class I observed. Being a minority in the class also came as a surprise to me, and as I listened to the Vietnamese around me on the first day of class I felt a little intimidated, despite having lived a year with a Vietnamese woman.

On the first day, another of the European-Americans confided that the class seemed unfair because she "had an advantage," since English was her first language. She wondered about testing out. An older European-American later said that she had had reservations about meeting in groups also, as she worried about whether she would be accepted or included into a group of younger Asian students. Along the same lines, a Vietnamese-American wondered if the experience of sharing her English with other people would be "humiliating," and she felt nervous about meeting in groups. Other post-ESOL students stated later that they had had similar thoughts.

Once in the groups, many students discovered that writing in English was not necessarily easier for those who spoke it as a first language than for those who didn't. "The best part of the class was

the groups," shared one post-ESOL student, "they stretched our imaginations, helped us to know our classmates as friends, and taught us that all of us have problems writing English." The European-American who first thought she had an advantage later discovered that she didn't, as some of her group members wrote English eloquently and expressively. She was glad that she had remained in the class. "It exposed me to the individuality of others," she shared. "On the first day of class, I couldn't tell the Asian students apart. Now, just from looking at writing for the read-around, I can tell you which pieces the members of my group wrote." The older woman, worried about age and culture differences, had found her group members admirable in their "willingness to take risks" and she had found "acceptance, intimacy, and trust" in her group.

Despite the fears of many students on the first day of class, the instructor and the peer response groups helped many of us transcend the apprehension and anxiety we felt both about our writing and about each other. Sharing our writing in small, intimate groups led us toward a greater understanding of each other as people, and gave us a greater understanding about what it meant to write and to write well.

Peer Response Groups: A Comparison

In some ways, Kurt's and Goethe's classes were similar. Both instructors dressed casually and had the goal of being non-threatening in class. Students in their classes had low anxiety

about their final grade, and could concentrate on other things. The instructors demonstrated concern and awareness of students by making the texts available at lower costs, for example. Both believed that students needed to read in order to write, and wanted students to write about subjects relevant to their lives. Neither came to class with an exact lesson plan; both included impromptu stories and analogies in their lectures. Kurt and Goethe made ESOL students feel at ease, Kurt through his stories of living overseas himself, and Goethe through his awareness of other cultures, demonstrated in small ways such as pronouncing students' names appropriately. Both instructors also wanted to encourage their students to accept the diversity in the class through group activities.

The peer response groups in each class were different, however, in some very fundamental ways. In Kurt's class, the groups were one of many class activities. When they met, he put the students into groups, and he assigned the topic for their writing. He gave them questions to respond to after sharing their writing, and had them write, although not share, a second draft. Groups did not stay together: students changed groups, to diversify their experience. They met in the classroom. At times, Kurt interrupted the group's interaction to give them a time to finish, switch group members, and make other comments. Kurt had students read each other's writing silently as well as aloud, and in one session students might only read one or two peers' pieces. He was the final evaluator

of the students' writing, and the students had several sessions in which their goal was to look only for grammar and spelling errors.

In Goethe's class, the entire class was structured around peer response groups. Students selected their own groups, and what they would write each time. Each group stayed together for the entire term, to foster the intimacy Goethe felt was necessary for them to share their writing. Groups chose where they would meet throughout the term. Reading aloud was an integral part of each session, and everyone had to share something each time. Goethe visited the groups and participated as a member, not as an instructor. He gave students written and oral feedback, but they received no evaluation. Goethe described writing with Britton et al's (1975) categories of communicative, expressive, and poetic; Kurt gave a lecture on Narrative, Descriptive, Argumentative, and other types of discourse. When discussing second drafts, Goethe found revision necessary at times, but laughed at the thought of reading a revised piece aloud to a group. He included "read-arounds" as part of his class experience, where students met as a class to share their best writing. Goethe gave students feedback about their writing, but he did not make evaluations of writing.

From a participant's and observer's view, the peer response groups in Goethe's class changed many students' attitudes toward writing through friendship and support from other students. Kurt's class did not succeed in becoming the kind of community that Goethe's did, nor did the students become as excited or confident about their writing. It should be remembered, however, that Kurt's

class is several stages below Goethe's in the academic progression: first ESOL students must pass Kurt's class, or its equivalent, and then after more experience in non-ESOL classes, including a freshman-level writing class, they enter Goethe's class, or its equivalent.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The main question guiding this research has been: Given that peer response groups are believed to be useful for teaching writing in first language classrooms in the United States, does this procedure appear to be as useful for teaching writing in ESOL classrooms? Specific research questions were directed at each of the six perspectives that peer response groups were studied from in order to answer this question (questions are listed in Chapter I). The six perspectives included a study of the transcripts of peer response groups in an ESOL writing class, information from the students in this class, interviews with three individuals in this class, interviews with the class' instructor, surveys of the ESOL writing instructor community, and journal entries of a participant in an upper division required writing class whose professor used peer response groups. It is appropriate at this point to address these specific questions before addressing the main question of this study, which will be addressed in Chapter VI.

ESOL PEER RESPONSE GROUPS: A PERSPECTIVE

While the ESOL students are in peer response groups, what are they doing?

Research shows that instructors have various opinions as to what their students do in peer response groups. Some believe that they are sharing ideas, becoming more independent and confident as writers, providing each other with "scaffolding," participating in each other's intellectual, academic, and social development, and learning how to solve problems in groups. Others believe that they are giving unskilled and uncritical editorial comments, intimidating each other, wasting class time, avoiding giving each other criticism, and lowering the quality of their writing (for a complete discussion, see, for example, Bruffee 1984; Cavanagh & Styles, 1983; DiPardo & Freedman, 1988; Keh, 1990; and Reisen, 1990).

In the peer response groups in this ESOL classroom, first and foremost, peers were communicating with each other. There were no occasions where group members did not interact to some extent. This communication took various forms: it could be personal, such as Sidik and Ling discussing California and Colorado in Group 1, and Eri asking Dao about her family in Group 2, or it could be related to the writing, as for example Nicolae and Hamoodei discussing a phrase in Group 4, and Dao and Wendi disagreeing about the appropriateness of "mosquitoes" in one paper in Group 6. Its goal could be facilitation, as when Dao restates Eri's question for Nicolae in Group 2. The students were talking about a variety of subjects,

but most of them were talking much of the time, in English, with each other, without the instructor's encouragement.

Comparing their writing and gathering information were other activities in the groups. Sidik in Group 1 and Dao in Group 3 both noticed that their papers were considerably shorter than the other students. Dao found that hers was more personal and not as scholarly as Nicolae's in Group 3. Nicolae told Dao that her essay was better than his in Group 6. Aside from comparisons that they expressed aloud, students appeared to be gathering information silently that they were able to use later in their writing. For example, Eri added information to her second draft that other group members had discussed while responding to Nicolae's essay, and Nicolae also incorporated information into his essay from Eri's work, although neither had spoken during these discussions. Kazuko wrote her second draft in a more formal voice, and Ling added more detail when she rewrote, although their peers had not included this in their advice.

Students were discussing their writing. Sometimes they were discussing the content, and why the writer had or had not put certain information into the writing, such as Group 4 asking Hamoodei why he hadn't included the price of tuition. Other times they were discussing organization, such as Eri asking Nicolae about his introduction in Group 2, or language use, or for example Dao and Nicolae's discussion of the phrase "knowing from my experience," and Wendi and Yasu's discussion of "alumnus" in Group 5. In some cases the suggestions were appropriate, such as Dao's "from my

experience," and in others the students appeared unable to grasp the true nature of a problem, as for example when Nicolae suggested that Hamoodei's tangled sentence might just need a comma in Group 4, or when Group 1 failed to realize that the "Greeks" Ling wanted to study with at Bucknell University were actually American sorority and fraternity members.

Some of their time was spent complimenting each other about their writing. In all groups some amount of support and reassurance was given to the writers, and in cases where the responders especially liked the writing, the writers were praised by several times or by several group members, for example, Hamoodei's three repetitions of "This is a nice essay" to Dao in Group 3. In Group 1, when Sidik told Kurt that he "feels bad" about his writing, Wendi told him not to.

Empathizing with each other about the difficulty of writing in English and writing well was another thing groups did. When Nicolae regretted not having added some information in Group 2, Hamoodei reassured him. Hamoodei's group laughed understandingly as he discovered problems with his essay while reading aloud in Group 4. Empathizing about cultural differences they had discovered as international students in the U.S. also occurred in Group 6.

The groups spent time following instructions, trying to answer the questions that the instructor had given them. This was especially true for the groups which met in the room where the instructions had been written on the board. Nicolae repeatedly asked his group for responses to these questions (Group 2). Group 6 also

referred to the questions often during their discussion. Groups focused more on the questions "What do you like/dislike?" and "Is it convincing?" than "Does the essay accomplish its purpose?" or "Does anything interfere with the message." Discussions in Groups 5 and 6 revealed that the students had different interpretations of what being "convincing" and "interfering with the message" meant.

Reading aloud and organizing the group were two other activities students did within the groups. When defending their own writing or making a point about someone else's, many of the students would read from their copies of the writing. Because there was no authority figure telling the students who should read, students had to negotiate who would begin to read each time and to decide when they were finished with one piece. Students also cooperated when deciding who would read or when they were finished with an essay, as for example at the beginning of Group 2 when Hamoodei finishes Nicolae's sentence clarifying the procedures of peer response groups.

Students talked about things other than their writing while in peer response groups. Sometimes their writing would lead to another topic, such as Nicolae's explanation of the relationship between Hungarians and Romanians after reading his essay in Group 6. Sometimes after a silence a group member would say something not related to the writing, such as Sidik discussing reasons foreign students come to the U.S. after Ling read her essay in Group 1. Certain group members would initiate topics when their writing was criticized and they disagreed with the criticism, such as Sidik

talking about Colorado after Wendi's suggestion that his essay needed more details in Group 1. On other occasions the topic appeared useful for the students even if it was not related to the writing, such as Nicolae and Eri discovering that they both had found different statistics about the same topic. In Group 6, the interaction not related to the writing served to help Dao, Wendi and Nicolae share personal and cultural information and make it relevant to their own lives. Although some instructors may want their students to stay strictly on the subject of their writing, this interaction that is not directly related to the writing can help students share information, and "keep communication channels open and help daily life move smoothly" (Danis 1988). Elbow (1981) would argue that trust and intimacy among group members is necessary to effectively share writing, and without some speech that is not directly related to the writing these cannot develop.

In one case, two group members seemed to be mainly criticizing or intimidating another member of their group (Group 5). Sidik and Wendi found nothing good to say about Kazuko's writing. At first she tried to defend it, but after multiple interruptions she replied only with "Yeah" or "Um-hum" until the session finished. In another case, three group members seemed to be mainly avoiding criticizing or intimidating another member of their group (Group 3). After Eri's first response to Dao's criticism sounded defensive, the other members complimented her, reassured her, and moved away from the subject of her writing and quickly onto another essay.

Nicolae was able to take in a certain amount of critical feedback, but after a certain point he put a stop to Dao's comments (Group 2).

In summary, while in peer response groups, the ESOL students were interacting with one another, comparing writing, gathering information about writing and about each other, discussing writing, empathizing about the difficulty of writing in English, praising each other's writing, following the instructions that the instructor had given them, reading aloud, negotiating turns, criticizing writing, intimidating each other, and talking about topics not related to the writing.

When they discuss writing, what do ESOL students give each other feedback about?

Critics of peer response groups often cite the topics that students choose to talk about for support. Cavanagh & Styles (1983) quote teachers who complain, "My students mark only the easy things" (p. 63). Graner (1987) finds his students give "unskilled and uncritical editorial comments" (p. 40). Keh (1990) suggests that students must be "trained how to separate lower and higher concerns in writing," as it is more beneficial for them to discuss content problems than surface type problems (p. 298).

From the individual profiles, students in this ESOL writing class appear to have, at some time, discussed or listened to discussion of all five of the areas of writing: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. In the breakdown of percentages, some students were found to have spent more time

responding to language use (Dao) and vocabulary (Nicolae), but more students discussed the content of the writing than any of the other areas (see Tables VII and VIII in Chapter IV).

These discussions of content, however, may not have been the in-depth discussions that Keh had in mind. Examples of typical responses to the content would be Dao pressing Wendi to give more details about Indonesian food in Group 6, and Hamoodei, suggesting to Dao to give "more numbers" about Mt. Vernon in Group 3. Groups did spend time discussing things that Keh would consider lower concerns and Cavanagh & Styles would call "the easy things." Examples of this were Wendi questioning Yasu for several minutes about his use of the word "alumnus" (Group 5), or Dao pointing out that "choose" should be "chose" in Nicolae's paper near the end of Group 2's meeting.

Two things should be remembered, however, with this information. First, these are ESOL students, who often in the past have been encouraged to pay more attention to the form than to the content of their own writing (see, for example, Zamel, 1985; Chapin, 1988). It can, thus, be expected that they will pay more attention to form in others' writing as well. Second, most of the students were relatively new at giving their peers feedback. Wolk & Reese (1991) believe that the intimacy and confidence which is the base for valuable sharing and responding in a group can only develop over time. Whether or not this is true for these students, more experience in peer response groups would give them more exposure

to the kinds of response that can be made and thus increase the different kinds of feedback they would eventually give.

Are there representative peer response group types in ESOL writing classes, and if so, what are they?

In a descriptive study, George (1984) listed several group types she had observed while using peer response groups in writing classrooms. She describes these as the "Task-Oriented group, the Leaderless group, and the Dysfunctional group" (p. 321). In the leaderless and dysfunctional groups, the students perceived interaction with each other as a threat, and wanted only feedback from an authority figure. The task-oriented group, the only successful one described, does not necessarily consist of students who write well, but rather those who are willing to talk and listen to one another.

Nothing seems to insure that a particular group of people would interact helpfully with each other in peer response groups. Peers can be more helpful to each other on one day than another, for many reasons. Changes of structure within groups influence the interaction among peers, and of course events in their personal lives or in their class outside of the groups can influence it also.

For the peer response groups observed in this study, rather than categories, I would propose a spectrum running from "Helpful" to "Unhelpful." Helpful groups leave their participants better informed and confident about their writing, and participants in Unhelpful groups leave them feeling miserable and embarrassed

about their writing. These labels are dynamic: a Helpful group can become Unhelpful as they respond to something as simple as the approaching end of class, for example. Changes in the roles of sharers and responders and the writing they discuss can move a group in one direction or another.

The figures of group interaction graphed can give an indication of whether a group is Helpful or Unhelpful. Bars of a figure represent the amount of criticism, questions, neutral responses, support or defense, and non-related topics discussed by students sharing and responding to writing. Groups whose responders offer only criticism and no support and whose sharers only defend their writing have a tendency to be unhelpful. Groups whose sharers and responders spend a great deal of time discussing non-related topics may be unhelpful. On the other hand, a group whose sharers and responders offer some criticism, ask some questions, make some supportive and defensive comments and possibly spend some time talking about non-related topics would have a greater tendency to be helpful (for examples, see Chapter IV Figures 1-6).

Group 4 appeared to be a Helpful group. Hamoodei's group empathized with his mistakes and encouraged him to add information that he was reluctant to add. He in turn initiated questions and made comments about his writing. The profile of the group given in Figure 4 shows somewhat even distribution of the group's interaction. Hamoodei's second draft became longer with added detail, and he filled out the conclusion. Group 4 resembled George's task-oriented group type in that the students were not

necessarily gifted writers, but rather simply willing to talk and listen to each other. The group appeared to leave Hamoodei better informed and more confident about his writing.

Changes in the group structure of Group 3 make it interesting to discuss. The group approached being an Unhelpful group in its beginning stages. Eri, uncomfortable at having her writing discussed, reacted defensively to the first response that was given. Her peers sensed this and avoided responding to her writing. She in turn did not seek feedback. Then Dao became the sharer of writing and Eri a responder. Dao's topic amused the other group members, and Nicolae and Hamoodei asked her questions about the content and style. After a few minutes Eri began to offer Dao some feedback also. A switch in writer and responder roles caused the group to move from Unhelpful toward Helpful.

An example of an Unhelpful group would be Group 5. Wendi and Sidik attacked Kazuko's paper, and overtly insulted her and her writing several times. They did not seek to know why she had written what she had, and she initiated no questions and soon stopped trying to explain her point of view. At the end of the meeting, the group seemed to have left Kazuko feeling miserable and embarrassed about her writing. The profile of the group in Figure 5 shows a great deal of responder criticism and speech not related to the writing; the sharer interaction consisted only of defense and speech not related to the writing. Another example of a somewhat Unhelpful group was Group 1. Although it was not as extreme a case as Group 5, like George's leaderless group, two group members

appeared to perceive interaction about the writing as a threat. Their response was to guide the group's interaction away from the writing. It should be noted, however, that despite the fact that Groups 1 and 5 seemed more unhelpful than helpful to an observer, Ling, Kazuko and Yasu did return with longer, more developed second drafts afterwards.

One factor to consider when analyzing these groups is the instructor who was present in the room where some groups met. Although he did not participate in a group, Kurt's interjections into the conversation of Groups 2, 3, and 4 let them know that he was listening as they spoke. Not unexpectedly, the figures of these groups show less N/R interaction (not directly related to the writing) per writing related interaction than Groups 1, 5 and 6.

Are there representative individual types within the peer response groups, and if so, what are they?

In these observed peer response groups, there appeared to be certain roles that were open for peers to fill. Various combinations of peers would influence the roles each one would fill, and one peer could also fill several roles simultaneously. If there was a vacancy, another peer could take on a role. When too many students took on the same role, the group tended to become an Unhelpful group. Students were not confined to these roles, but tended to gravitate toward them.

For each student, an individual profile has been graphed based on an adaptation of Kluckhohn's model for comparing and contrasting

cultures (Kohl, 1987). In many cases, knowledge of the role of a student in a particular group made it possible to predict which boxes of the figures representing the students as writers and responders would be filled in (for examples, see Chapter IV Figures 7-20). . The roles I observed in these ESOL peer response groups were: the Spokesperson, the Editor, the Observer, the Serious Student, the Defendant, the Terminator, and the Writer-Responder.

The Spokesperson. Spokespeople indicate who will begin to read, and when the response to one paper is finished. Spokespeople's advice may not be good, but there will be a lot of it: their amount of participation will be high. If a non-group member asks the group a question, the Spokesperson will be the one to answer. Spokespeople, if for nothing else, are good for group organization. Of these students, Sidik (while in Groups 1 and 5), Nicolae (while in Groups 2 and 3), and to a lesser extent Hamoodei (while in Group 4) and Dao (while in Groups 2 and 4) filled the role of Spokesperson.

The Editor. The Editor, after sharing or listening to a paper, becomes preoccupied with topics concerning the mechanics, language use and vocabulary, often at the expense of discussing content, organization, or non-related topics that might be appropriate. More boxes at the bottom of the Editor's profile as a responder will be filled in than those at the top. The Editor's advice will usually be correct, but has an effect on a limited part of the writing. Of these students, Dao (while in Group 2), Nicolae (while in Group 3), and Eri (while in Groups 2 and 3) all filled the role of Editor.

The Observer. Observers watch and listen, but have little response to give. Observers hesitate to speak, either from shyness or habit, but are usually attentive and learn through observation. When graphed on a profile, the boxes in the Responder's figure will mostly be blank. Observers are not harmful, but too many Observers can turn peer response groups into a debate with an audience. Of these students, Kazuko (while in Group 5), Yasu (while in Groups 4 and 5), Eri (while in Group 2 and 3), and to a lesser extent, Hamoodei (while in Group 2 and 3) all filled the role of Observer. Figures 10, 14 and 16 are all profiles of students in the role of Observer.

The Serious Student. The Serious Student is anxious to become a better writer, and takes the peer response groups seriously. All aspects of writing look important to this person. Serious Students are most anxious to improve their own writing, and may be found rereading it while the rest of the group is discussing someone else's. Serious Students may overlook an interesting subject of discussion because they are following an assignment precisely. Serious Students are not overly harmful, they just need time. Of these students, Nicolae filled the role of Serious Student (while in Groups 2 and 4).

The Defendant. Defendants defend their writing at all costs, usually before considering the meaning or implications of the response they react to. Because they spend their time defending their writing, more boxes on the right side of their profiles as writers will be filled in than those on the left. Defendants often go to great lengths to explain their writing to an audience that may

find the explanations less than interesting. Defendants may also seek to deflect the interaction from their writing to something less threatening. Defendants have less chance of learning from their peers' responses because of their preoccupation with their own work. Defendants often add little to their groups, but they are somewhat inevitable. Of these students, Sidik (while in Group 1) and Eri (while in Group 3) filled the role of Defendant. Figures 15 and 19 are both profiles of students in the role of Defendant.

The Terminator. Terminators point out everything that they dislike in a piece of writing with little regard for the effect of this criticism on the writer. Because this person is spending time criticizing writing without making any supportive comments, more boxes on the right side of this person's profile as a responder will be filled in than on the left. Terminators give no supportive feedback, and do not see writing as a process. They are apt to give painful and possibly inaccurate feedback. One Terminator can ruin a writer's day. Of these students, Sidik (while in Group 5) and to some extent Wendi (while in Group 5) filled the role of Terminator. Figure 20 is a profile of a student in the role of Terminator.

The Writer-Responder. The Writer-Responder is the ideal group member. Writer-Responders are not necessarily the best writers, but they are sincere ones. They are interested in sharing their own writing and equally responsive to their peers. They tend to discuss content and organization. As they are giving both criticism and support, the boxes of their profiles as writers and responders are filled in from left to right. As they are discussing

aspects of writing such as content more than those such as mechanics, more boxes on the top of their profiles will be filled in than those on the bottom. Writer-Responders are aware of the roles other students are holding, and sometimes are able to help them become Writer-Responders too. Writer-Responders take time to develop. Of these students, those who approached the role of Writer-Responder were Nicolae (while in Groups 2 and 6), Hamoodei (while in Groups 3 and 4), Dao (while in Group 6) and Wendi (while in Group 6).

What effect does participation in peer response groups have on students' revisions?

The effects of a broader audience, less threatening feedback, and exposure to new ideas have the potential to improve students' writing (Berkenkotter, 1984). Bruffee (1984) warns that "throwing students together with their peers with no guidance or preparation merely perpetuates their possible negative effects," one of which is a "leveling down" or lowering of quality (p. 652). Comparisons made between the first and second drafts of these students revealed several changes.

Many of the essays became longer. In some cases, this could have been due to peers' advice, although in others, such as Ling's, it could have been exposure to other essays and/or feedback. The essays which did not become longer or more detailed did not become "worse." Eri, for example, reproduced her first essay with essentially no changes. Some students appeared to develop a sense

of authority over their writing, such as Berkenkotter reported. For example, Wendi told Yasu that he had used the expression "I think" too frequently. Yasu disagreed, explaining that this meant things were "common sense," and he rewrote his essay with all "I think"s intact. Hamoodei also left the word "finally," that Nicolae had criticized and Dao had supported.

After hearing their group's advice not to write in such a personal style, Dao, Ling and Kazuko shifted their writing style from an "expressive" one to more "communicative" (Britton et al, 1975). As they wrote more factually, and made more references to the research, their writing became more informative, but lost the personal point of view that it had in the first draft.

ESOL STUDENTS: A PERSPECTIVE

After participating in peer response groups, will the students find them useful or not, and for what reasons?

Most of the ESOL students found the peer response groups to be useful. Eight of nine liked getting feedback from peers about their writing, and seven of nine liked the experience of responding to their peers' writing.

Reasons they gave for finding the feedback useful fell into two categories: those who liked getting another perspective of their writing (four students), and those who liked finding "errors" in their paper (two students). One student felt that students hadn't taken

their peers' writing seriously, and another thought that the instructor should guide the groups.

Reasons they gave for finding responding to their peers writing useful included "learning new things" (four students), "comparing their writing" (two students) and "learning about culture" (one student). One student was displeased because he found his peers did not read English well.

All students found responding to be very difficult. Three indicated their strategy was to look for problems of form when they could not think of a response to give. One did not give criticism to avoid hurting her peers' feelings.

What changes will occur in the students' desire to write, their perceptions of themselves as writers, their desire for an audience and their feelings about sharing their writing after participating in peer response groups?

These students' desire to write in English, which was high, did not change significantly between the term's beginning and end. Three of nine students changed their perceptions of themselves as writers. Ling and Nicolae's perceptions went down, and Dao's went up. By the term's end, Wendi became less willing to share his writing, and Yasu and Hamoodei became more willing to share theirs.

Some of the changes that peer response groups may cause in writers were difficult to observe, because this class began the term with mostly good feelings about themselves as writers of English and a desire for a broad audience, and almost half were already

willing to share their writing. Ling's and Nicolae's lower perceptions of themselves as writers may have been a result of comparing their writing to that of other students, and seeing it from a different perspective for the first time. Dao's perception may have been raised for a similar reason: while sharing her writing, she could compare it with others. Thus, it could be that their self perceptions had not gotten better or worse, but rather more realistic.

The fact that Hamoodei became more willing to share his writing could have been a direct result of Group 4, which encouraged and supported his writing. Yasu was also present in Group 4 for Hamoodei's experience. Wendi became less willing, which could have been a result of watching the interaction between Kazuko and Sidik in Group 5, which, although it was not focused on him, was neither supportive nor encouraging.

How do students react to reading their writing aloud?

Elbow (1981) and Wolk & Reese (1991) state that a feeling of authorship and responsibility come when people read their writing aloud. Yamamoto (1991), however, explains that an inferiority complex about speaking and fear of losing face in front of a group may make some Japanese students uncomfortable in the ESOL classroom.

Some ESOL instructors believe that students acquire language best by listening to someone speaking their first language. Nayar

(1989), however, argues that soon speakers of English in the Outer and Expanding Circles (i.e. Nigeria; Japan) will outnumber speakers of English in the Inner Circle (i.e. Britain, U.S.A.), and ESOL students will need experience comprehending English spoken as an additional language.

Five of the nine students found that reading their writing aloud was preferable, one had no preference, and three would have preferred to read their writing silently. Wendi, who preferred reading aloud, stated that this also improved his reading. Of the four who did not prefer to read aloud, three were Japanese and the fourth was from mainland China. While in groups, none of these four students made a comment to organize the group, and only Yasu read aloud. Eri and Kazuko, who preferred to read silently, also preferred to work individually while in class.

How does these students' participation in peer response groups compare with their participation in class?

Four categories were compared: students interacting in open discussion, in group activities, while sharing their writing and while responding to their peers' writing. Seven of eight students had the highest percentage of participation while sharing their writing. The second highest percentages of participation were divided equally between responding to a peer's writing, and other group activities. The category where students had the lowest average of participation, and where the amount of participation was most varied among students was in open discussions. In all

activities, females generally had lower average participation than males, but their overall participation was higher while sharing their writing than in any of the other activities.

As measured on a holistic evaluation scale, does the students' writing improve during the term?

As measured by this holistic evaluation scale, four of eight students improved their writing while four of eight students did not. The class average was very nearly the same at the beginning and the end: 79 and 77. When considering these scores, several things should be kept in mind. The first essays were written at the beginning of the term, before the students were aware of the instructor's alternative evaluation scale. They were written on a topic that the students were experts on: advice to give to a student from their country coming to study in the U.S. The students were given directions to write a five paragraph essay including an introduction and a conclusion.

The second essays were written near the term's end, when the students were also writing a large term paper and a comparison and contrast paper on The Handmaid's Tale. They were written after the students knew they would receive the evaluation of "+" or "√" rather than a letter grade. Although the topic was intended to be comparable with the first, it may have been that these students were focused on the international experience they were having and that "giving advice to someone traveling to your country" was more difficult to write about than the earlier topic. This essay was

assigned with directions to "write a standard essay," which may have caused some of the students to write a shorter or less organized essay than the first. Yasu in particular did not appear to take the assignment as seriously as he did the first. As his second essay was very short, the holistic evaluation revealed a difference of twenty-two points between it and his first.

It should also be considered whether it is realistic to expect that students' writing will improve measurably over a period of ten weeks. For the purposes of the study, the relatively similar class average and improvement of four of eight students are encouraging.

THREE ESOL PEER RESPONSE GROUP PARTICIPANTS: A PERSPECTIVE

<u>What experiences have these individuals had
before they come into university ESOL writing
classes that appear to affect their experiences
in peer response groups?</u>

Hamoodei, a Palestinian male from Qatar; Eri, a Japanese female; and Dao, a Thai female, all came to this ESOL writing class with certain experiences which affected their reaction to peer response groups.

Dao was used to small classes such as this one. She had not been punished in school for "incorrect" writing when she was young, and she occasionally shared her writing with her friends and siblings. Dao liked writing in English, and she was in this class because she wanted to be, not because of a TOEFL score. On the

other hand, Dao had been in the United States for only a short time, and she felt lonely, and worried about her finances.

As a child, Eri had been punished in school for "incorrect" writing, and she did not share her writing with her friends. She did not like formal writing, and was in this class out of necessity. Rather than sending her to the U.S., her family had left her here while they returned. Eri, however, was well adjusted to the United States, and had attended high school in Oregon.

Hamoodei had been punished for "incorrect" writing in school, and was unaccustomed to small classes. He was also relatively unaccustomed to studying with females. Although he had begun English at the youngest age, his writing ability at the beginning of the class appeared to be much lower than Eri's or Dao's. Hamoodei was unhappy in ESOL classes, and resented having to repeat this class, albeit with a different instructor. He had decided to work harder this term, however, and he was pleased with a move into an apartment by himself, an American driver's license and a new car.

The information revealed from the interviews does point in a certain direction, although the success of peer response groups "hinges on a number of subtle emotional and intellectual factors" (Berkenkotter, 1984, p. 318). Because Dao was in the class of her own will, was used to sharing her writing, and enjoyed writing, she was more likely to find peer response groups useful. On the other hand, Eri, who disliked writing formally, had disliked a previous experience with peer response groups, and would rather not have been in the U.S., was less likely to find peer response groups useful.

It was difficult to make a prediction about Hamoodei. On one hand, he disliked ESOL and writing, but on the other, he was used to sharing his writing and came from a family who valued literature and writing. It seemed possible that he might, or might not like peer response groups for a number of reasons.

What is their approach to writing, and how does their approach relate to peer response group activities?

All three students had different manners of approaching a writing assignment when they were told to write for class.

Hamoodei felt the need to write quickly, without preparation. He would stop, reread, and continue, without taking time to revise for fear he would forget what was in his head. He often gave the first part of his writing to his friends for their opinion. Revising came later, after he had completed everything he wanted to write.

Eri would begin an assignment by writing it in Japanese. She would then translate, and when this was done, she felt that the writing was completed. As Yamamoto (1991) indicates is the case for many Japanese speakers of English, Eri was "grammar oriented." The most important aspect of writing for her was that the grammar be correct.

Dao started writing by making an outline and writing a rough draft which she then edited and rewrote. It was important to her that her writing be expressive and interesting, and for this reason she tried to put questions into her writing, and then answer them later.

Peer response groups seem to have a natural place in Dao's and Hamoodei's approach to writing. Both approaches include or imply a second draft. Feedback would appear to be beneficial to them. between their original and their revised drafts. This does not seem to be the case with Eri's approach to writing. She considered her writing complete after the translation, and any feedback would need to be grammar-oriented in order to have a place in her approach to writing.

What social and cultural factors seem relevant to these individuals' experiences in peer response groups?

The danger of viewing these three students as Japanese, Palestinian and Thai cultural representatives has been discussed. They should be seen as individuals, who may or may not be similar to what is perceived as a prototypical member of their societies.

While participating in peer response groups, Eri spoke infrequently, and felt embarrassed and vulnerable when she had to share her writing. She found it difficult to think of responses, and usually looked for problems of form. She did not encourage feedback to her own writing, and did not incorporate any of the suggestions in her second draft. Yamamoto (1991) explains that silence is a cultural value in Japan, and that for many Japanese students, silence in class is a factor of a teacher-fronted classroom. Fear of losing face and feeling inferior about their English is also common to many Japanese students (Yamamoto, 1991). This information may provide some background to Eri's reaction to peer response groups.

Hamoodei liked sharing his writing, as well as hearing the writing of others. He had especially enjoyed reading aloud and discovering things, written in the haste of his first draft, that he needed to revise. In Group 2 and the first part of Group 3, Hamoodei had mostly listened to the other students' discuss Nicolae's and Eri's papers, but as they moved to Dao's paper Hamoodei's participation increased considerably.

While discussing his own paper, he turned to the instructor and asked him how to write a certain sentence. The instructor corrected the spelling and order of several words, but when the sentence reappeared three words that had previously been spelled correctly were misspelled. This incident demonstrates both Hamoodei's appeal to an authority over the advice of his peers, and the low place English spelling and mechanics appeared to hold in the priorities he had when writing. Parker et al (1976) note that students from the Middle East need a "paternal relationship," and "expect to look up to their professors and receive strong guidance from them" (p. 100). They add that, initially, students from the Middle East generally do better in a more disciplined situation. As Hamoodei was not concerned with the small details of his paper, his feedback was not directed towards them when discussing the papers of others either. His comments tended to be more general, or directed toward content (see Figure 8).

Hamoodei appeared to gain from the feedback from his peers. His second draft was considerably longer and more developed, including some details suggested by his peers. The desire to

interact that so often kept him from arriving to class on time seemed, after he understood what was expected, to enable him to enjoy peer response groups and learn from them.

Dao, as Hamoodei, enjoyed sharing her writing and receiving the feedback of her peers. She appeared comfortable while interacting in the groups, laughing often, and she seemed very interested in comparing her writing with that of other students. She took some of her peers' advice, but sometimes chose not to, always with specific reasons. For example, when Hamoodei told her that her essay needed more statistics, she did not add them, but took his statement "as a clue" that she needed to change her style.

When she gave others response, Dao most often made comments about organization and language use, although she sometimes discussed the content. She stated privately that she did not want to "remind others of something, because it could discourage them," and indicated a different time that she didn't give much advice "because I didn't want to hurt others' feelings." Dao seemed to sense when her peers wanted or did not want her feedback to a certain extent. In Group 2, when Nicolae asked repeatedly for advice, she supplied it, and in Group 3 when Eri was unreceptive to Dao's criticism of her conclusion, Dao quickly complimented another aspect of the essay. Fieg (1989), while discussing Thai culture, states that "once a Thai is in a general milieu, he or she generally tries to fit into that environment and get along harmoniously with the group," and adds that criticism in Thailand is often indirect, with most problems to be guessed at or assumed rather than

mentioned directly (p. 33). These statements could put Dao's behavior into a cultural context.

In a study discussed earlier, Berkenkotter (1984) analyzed the reactions of three college students to peer response groups, including a student, Pat, who rewrote his essay with suggestions from his peers included, and rejected advice from his teacher due to his increased sense of authority over his writing. In this study of Hamoodei, Eri and Dao, a comparison could be made between Dao and Pat. Dao was among the better writers of the class, and peer response groups made her aware of this. Her perception of herself as a writer changed from "fair" to "good," and her reaction to sharing her writing from "happy" to "excited." She analyzed the advice she was given, and chose whether to take it or to leave it. Her sense of authority over her writing also seemed to have grown.

What insights have the interviews revealed about these individuals' experiences in peer response groups, and how can this information be of help to future ESOL teachers?

From the beginning interviews, it was possible to predict that Dao would be the most likely to react positively to the peer response groups, and that Eri would be the most likely to react negatively to them. Their confidence as writers seemed to have a great effect on their reaction to sharing their writing. Dao felt good about her writing, and was accustomed to sharing it outside of class; Eri felt ashamed of her writing, and did not want anyone except the teacher to see it.

These conditions did not change over the term. A number of controllable and uncontrollable factors were responsible for Eri's reaction. Eri was the only one of the three students to have experienced corporal punishment while learning to write. She was unhappy in ESOL, and unhappy to be in the U.S. Perhaps more importantly, peer response groups did not seem to have a place in her approach to writing, and the interaction that peer response groups demand in a classroom situation may not have been culturally appropriate for her.

As a responder, when the attention was focused on another peer, Eri seemed more at ease than while sharing her writing, and she incorporated a piece of information into her second draft that other students in her group had discussed. Dao and Hamoodei both stated that they were not bothered by Eri's silence in their group. Eri's group was somewhat sensitive to the fact that she was uncomfortable with the situation. Group 5, unfortunately, was not as sensitive to Kazuko, who appeared to have similar feelings to Eri, and this resulted in a situation of dominance and intimidation. It could be that the response part of this activity is valuable for students similar to Eri, but sharing their writing, if it is to occur, needs to happen in a supportive environment.

All of these students were in the U.S. because of the wish of their fathers, and all of their early schooling occurred in environments that were more authoritarian than this ESOL writing classroom. Hamoodei's appeal to authority while in the group would seem to be natural, and it should perhaps also be seen as something

that would disappear as he spent more time in peer response groups. It could be, however, that if instructors wish to avoid a similar occurrence, they should have the groups meet outside of their immediate environment. This could encourage them to rely on each other.

Hamoodei and Dao appeared to grow from the experiences of the peer response groups. They enjoyed sharing their writing, stated that they had learned from doing so, and appreciated having access to their peers' essays as well. As Wolk & Reese (1991) indicated, the effect of this may be difficult to measure, reappearing in their writing at some future time. Their feedback to each other may not have greatly improved the second drafts of their essays, but discussing their writing did give them new ideas for their revisions. If they were to repeat the class, they both indicated that they would want to meet in peer response groups again.

THE ESOL WRITING INSTRUCTOR: A PERSPECTIVE

Why does this instructor choose to use peer response groups in the ESOL writing classroom?

Kurt uses peer response groups because they fit in with his philosophy of teaching ESOL writing, which states that students learn to write from "theory, practice and reflection." The peer groups encourage the students to view writing as a process, as they can see the progression from first draft to feedback and then a second draft. Another reason Kurt uses peer response groups,

despite finding in the past that students' comments about each other's writing were often "minimal," is that he likes the interaction that they foster among diverse students. His expectations for the groups are not high; he is satisfied if the students are able to have a "sharing of ideas."

How does this instructor prepare for and facilitate peer response groups in the ESOL classroom?

Kurt believes that students need an atmosphere of trust and familiarity in order to improve their writing. He tries to create an informal atmosphere by facilitating interaction among students, organizing interesting activities and maintaining a non-threatening presence in the classroom. Students in this class were working in groups and pairs during 42% of the class time. They had already spent considerable time in groups and pairs before Kurt organized the first peer response groups.

Kurt wanted the response groups to be diverse, and for this reason he assigned students to their groups. He encouraged the students to criticize each other's writing, but to do it "along parameters." He gave them specific questions to respond to, and asked them to read their writing aloud and give each other feedback about it. He did not set a time limit for them to spend on each paper, but continued the activity over several days until they had finished. He collected the first and second drafts of students' writing, to observe the changes that they made in their writing.

<u>Do the observations indicate anything that
might cause this particular instructor to be
more or less successful in facilitating peer
response groups, and if so, what?</u>

Kurt's goal was for his students to perceive him as non-threatening and to feel comfortable in his class, and he felt that if this were not achieved, the group work could not be successful. He cultivated their trust in various ways. He dressed and spoke casually, which helped the students perceive him as more of a friend and less of an authority figure, and he enabled students to buy their textbooks less expensively, which demonstrated a concern for their financial situations. He introduced topics and language that are often avoided in a public setting, and as the term progressed, students began to use language and discuss topics that they too might have avoided in other classrooms. At one point, a student made a comment using profanity, and instead of reacting to the language, Kurt incorporated it into a content-seeking question.

Students in Kurt's classroom were encouraged to participate in the class. In lectures and open discussions, Kurt included stories, cultural and personal information. When the students seemed interested in a second topic that had developed out of an earlier discussion, Kurt encouraged them to pursue the new topic. Kurt allowed students to use other languages in the classroom, and did not comment on those who arrived to class late.

Kurt used an evaluation system other than the standard "A, B, C, D, F," which may have been less intimidating to the students. On

several occasions, he brought a tape player and played loud rock music during the group discussions. The students were laughing and enjoying it, and I as an observer wondered if they could work in such an noisy atmosphere. Kurt later explained to me that if the classroom was quiet, the less assertive students such as Eri, Kazuko, Yasu and Ling would feel self-conscious and be reluctant to speak, but if there was some background noise, they might feel more willing to participate. I compared myself with Anglo teachers who viewed a video of a Yup'ik Eskimo teacher and thought his lesson was "busy-work and not creative," not understanding the approach behind the procedure that was taking place (Lipka, 1991, p. 214).

The non-threatening atmosphere that Kurt was able to create in his classroom may have helped the peer response groups that occurred be more successful because the students were used to working together, knew and trusted each other to some extent, and had an unusual amount of freedom in the language and topics they would discuss in the ESOL classroom.

One of the peer response groups, Group 5, seemed much less successful than the rest. At one point Kurt entered, listened for one moment, agreed with the student who was speaking and told the group "Good advice," unaware of the responses that Kazuko had been receiving. He was also unaware that neither of the groups that had met outside the classroom were discussing the questions he had written on the board. These factors may have contributed to Yasu's conclusion that he didn't like peer response groups because "some people don't take it seriously."

THE ESOL WRITING INSTRUCTOR COMMUNITY: A PERSPECTIVE

<u>What percentage of ESOL writing instructors</u>
<u>find peer response groups to be useful in the</u>
<u>ESOL writing classroom?</u>

Of the forty instructors who responded to the survey, 85% had used peer response groups in ESOL writing classrooms, 55% use them on a regular basis, and 43% find them to be useful in teaching writing.

This indicates that nearly half of the teachers who responded, who may of course have been those from a larger pool who were interested in the activity to begin with, believe that peer response groups have a place in the ESOL writing classroom. The majority of teachers find such groups useful for facilitating communication between students, although almost as many find them useful for improving writing content and form. Other reasons included providing students with a larger audience for their writing and helping them develop self-confidence.

<u>Are there factors that the ESOL writing</u>
<u>instructors who use peer response groups</u>
<u>appear to have in common?</u>

Half of these instructors have their students bring copies for other students to follow along. Most have them read silently, and most have them write several drafts of their writing. Almost all of the instructors make the final evaluations.

Teachers who use peer response groups tend to have been teaching ESOL classes for a longer period of time (9.7 compared to

6.3 years), and there is a greater chance that they have participated in such groups than those who do not use them (59% compared to 33%).

What support or criticism of peer response groups do the ESOL instructors give, and how does this correspond with research on peer response groups and with this study?

As mentioned earlier, research shows that some instructors believe that peer response groups help students share ideas, become more independent and confident as writers, participate in each other's intellectual, academic, and social development, and learn how to solve problems in groups. Others believe that students give unskilled and uncritical editorial comments, intimidate each other, waste class time, avoid giving criticism, and level down the quality of their writing.

The ESOL writing instructors who responded to the survey gave similar responses. Supportive responses included helping students become more self-reliant, raising their awareness of content, helping them see grammar mistakes, and saving teachers time. Criticisms they gave included students being reluctant to criticize each other, students not respecting each other, students not being qualified to give good evaluation, and students wanting feedback only from a teacher and not other students.

This study of peer response groups revealed many of the reactions described above. As a probable result of meeting in the groups, Ling, Dao, Kazuko, Nicolae and Hamoodei could be said to have

<u>What changes will occur in the participant's
desire to write, her perception of herself as
a writer, her desire for an audience to her
writing and her feelings about sharing her writing
after participating in peer response groups?</u>

These changes will have to be measured by some of the "invisible effects" that Goethe had listed. During the term, I looked forward to each group meeting. I was never late nor absent. I found myself writing more expressively in response to the other pieces that were being shared. For the first time, I sent copies of my writing to friends. Reading aloud to another writer and hearing their feedback has become an integral part of my writing whenever possible. Although I still lack confidence in my writing, I know that I wrote well enough to interest four people week after week. As I documented throughout the term, I found sharing my writing with the same people for ten weeks to be an invaluable experience.

<u>How do her experiences as a participant
compare with those of the three
individuals she interviewed?</u>

In many ways, what I and what Hamoodei, Dao and Eri experienced were completely different experiences. I was writing what I wanted for a group of people I had grown to know well, and they were sharing assigned essays that would be rewritten and evaluated with the students of the instructor's choice. Our experiences could not be equally meaningful.

Some of our reactions to sharing and responding to writing seemed similar, despite these differences. Like Eri, I felt afraid and embarrassed to share my writing. Like Hamoodei, I liked the

response that group members gave while I read aloud, whether laughter or other comments, to let me know if they followed. Like Dao, I grew to like reading aloud, and my self-perception as a writer, if it had been measured, would probably also have increased. Despite the differences in the groups, therefore, I still found that I had similar experiences and reactions to their peer response groups.

What comparisons can be made between the peer response groups in ESOL and non-ESOL classrooms?

In both classrooms, students appreciated being able to share their ideas, see other styles of writing, and compare their writing with their peers. For the most part, students liked the experience of reading aloud and found it exciting to hear each other's writing. Students offered each other support and suggestions for their writing, and they discovered that writing is difficult for many people. They also learned from the discussions, both related and unrelated, that would ensue from sharing their writing, and some became more confident about their writing ability as a result of the feedback from their peers.

In the non-ESOL class, where the groups did not change and students developed more intimate friendships with each other, many stated at the end of the class that the experience had helped them to like to write, and also to make friends through writing. These groups appeared to help many students to transcend their initial differences and apprehensions about each other and about their writing.

This intimacy was lacking in the ESOL peer response groups, partially because of the changing groups, the instructor's unawareness of the topics students discussed in the groups, and the smaller amount of time (10% compared to 66%) students spent in groups. It was observed that the ESOL instructor was at times unaware of the topics of discussion in the groups, and of the interpretations the students gave his guiding questions. Also, he did not appear to guide the groups as the non-ESOL instructor did through his participation in the groups as a writer and a responder. It must be remembered, however, that the ESOL instructor's curriculum demanded he spend some time preparing the students to do library research and write bibliographies, so that they would be successful in their future non-ESOL classes.

Although the ESOL class did not become the small community that the non-ESOL class became, most of these students found the experience of reading their writing aloud and responding to it to be useful, and they recommend its use in future ESOL classrooms.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PEER RESPONSE GROUPS IN THE ESOL CLASSROOM: A SUMMARY

This study attempted to discover the usefulness of peer response groups in ESOL classrooms, as seen from six perspectives: that of ESOL students, ESOL peer response groups, three individuals participating in these groups, the ESOL instructor, the ESOL instructor community, and a participant in a non-ESOL writing class in which peer response groups were used. One concern was that the study would generate so much information it would be impossible to come to a conclusion about these groups. It is true that the study generated a great deal of information, but it is possible to organize this information into a coherent picture of peer response groups in ESOL classrooms.

At the beginning of the study, it was stated that the success of peer response groups depended on three components -- the personalities of individual students, the realizations of their personalities in particular groups, and the instructors' preparations for these groups (Berkenkotter, 1984; George, 1984). Put in Marx's words, on which Vygotsky based his theories of cognitive development, "in order to understand the individual, one must first

understand the social relations in which the individual exists"
(Wertsch, 1985a, p. 58).

In this study, it was similarly found that certain students,
either because of their background, or because of the role they were
filling in that group, were more or less helpful as sharers of and
responders to writing. It was also found that students who
participated more in class had a tendency to participate more in
these groups than those who didn't, similar to Webb's (1982)
observations of minority students in groups with non-minority
students. Certain combinations of students in groups were more
effective than others. Despite the observation that the groups were
found to be more or less successful depending on these three
factors, the study revealed several ways in which peer response
groups in ESOL classrooms appear to be useful.

While in these non-hierarchical groups, cooperation among
students is necessary. Although students tend to fill certain roles
within their groups, all students must interact and collaborate with
each other to a certain extent. It was noted that the participation of
female ESOL students in classroom activities was highest while
they were in groups in which they shared and responded to writing,
and that student participation was more evenly distributed in peer
response groups than in other classroom activities. These
observations parallel those previously stated, which found that peer
response groups could give students a social content for learning and
put them into a position to ask questions and give directions, often
rare in the classroom (Bruffee, 1984; DiPardo & Freedman, 1988).

Students organized, negotiated, and read aloud. The language that they used with each other was informal and communicative. Peer response groups integrate ESOL skill areas, as they provide opportunities for students not only to write, but also to read, listen and speak.

The feedback that students received about their writing, while less accurate than that of their instructor, was also less intimidating, as seen through their decisions of whether to take the advice of their peers or not. Berkenkotter (1984) had also found this to be the case in an earlier study. In some situations, the decisions of whether to take or ignore the advice increased students' confidence in their own abilities to write. In the classroom where students were allowed to choose their own topics, their peer audience caused them to write more sincerely and diversely than a teacher-evaluator audience would have. This sincerity may come from students' involvement in each other's academic and social development, as Bruffee noted (1978).

As well as reading and discussing their writing, students in peer response groups were observing a number of things about each other's writing that could resurface unexpectedly. Students were sharing their writing styles and their ideas, although this was not always readily evident to a facilitator.

While in the peer response groups, most of the students complimented each other on their writing and empathized with each other as to its difficulty. Such supportive comments may provide a "scaffolding" for international students who are trying to make their

way through a difficult ESOL program. Similar interaction occurred in the non-ESOL class, and helped the students build confidence and find common ground while they struggled to write in English.

When ESOL students were discussing topics not directly related to the writing, they continued to interact in English, and the topics they discussed were often informative and valuable. Speech not directly related to the writing helped students further their friendships with one another and learn about each others' cultures. It served as an avoidance strategy, when students were reluctant to discuss their writing. In the non-ESOL classroom, where there was a great deal more of such speech, it served to further people's understandings of one another and create the base for the mutual trust necessary for sharing writing. As Hickmann (1985) states, the language in these groups is multifunctional.

A former criticism of peer response groups has been the time students spend discussing aspects of the writing that are not considered to be as important, such as mechanics and spelling (Cavanagh & Styles, 1983). Aside from specific students, these groups of ESOL students were found to spend the majority of their time discussing content. Although it was not measured, this appeared to be true of the group in the non-ESOL class as well.

A second criticism of peer response groups was that students gave each other either too much critical feedback, or not enough (Graner, 1987). One group demonstrated the former situation in this study. This seemed to result from a particular combination of personalities, and a lack of respect and intimacy in the group. More

time in peer response groups, an instructor presence as sharer and responder, or some type of coaching or modeling of acceptable behavior in such a group might offer solutions to this problem.

A third criticism of peer response groups, found in the literature, voiced by the ESOL instructor, and indicated in the surveys was simply the amount of class time these groups demand. In the ESOL class, they took up 10% of the class time; in the non-ESOL class, 66%. Other demands that are put on instructors may determine whether or how often they can use peer response groups in their classes.

A remaining question is how these groups are to be handled with students similar to Eri, who did not like working in groups, felt uncomfortable reading aloud and sharing her writing, and did not normally revise her writing. It may be that greater contact with a stable group, freedom to choose the topic of her writing, and peers sensitive to her embarrassment and low self-perception as a writer would make her experience in peer response groups as valuable as such students in the non-ESOL class found it to be. It may be that in such cases some modifications are necessary, such as reading silently and responding in writing as Eri suggested. It is also possible that, as Au (1982) found, peer response groups may be culturally appropriate for some students, but not for others, and should be used with caution.

Peer response groups encouraged cooperation and interaction among ESOL students. This activity integrated writing, reading, listening and speaking an additional language. Students were able to

develop confidence in their writing as a result of sharing it with their peers, and they reported learning from the experience of sharing ideas and hearing each other's writing. Participation of all students increased, and was more evenly distributed than in other classroom activities. Students were able to offer each other support, and their conversations helped them to learn about each other's cultures and personalities. Some criticisms can be made, such as overly critical and intimidating students or groups, and the question of the appropriateness of the activity with students who are timid and ashamed of their writing. Overall, however, there is much to indicate that peer response groups can be useful in ESOL classrooms.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THIS STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ON ESOL PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

As with all projects, this one did not progress completely as anticipated, and there were also some inherent problems with its design. Probably the biggest problem was the lack of data. The audio recordings for the first session of peer response groups were unintelligible, and only three students came to the third session. For these reasons, the study was based on six peer response groups meetings, which may or may not have been typical of this or other ESOL classrooms.

Another problem was depending entirely on audio recordings to interpret the occurrences in peer response groups. As I was not

present with the students, I relied on their speech to give a picture of their interaction while in the groups. It may be that I was unaware of non-verbal behavior or other factors which influenced their interaction.

The tally sheet used to interpret students' speech while in the groups was not 100% reliable. The most difficult decisions were often at what point the students were discussing the content of their writing, and at what point their speech could be considered not directly related to the writing. A future study may be more accurate with a modified tally sheet.

The group and individual profiles were limited. The group profiles showed the percentages of certain types of interaction, but were unable to specify if this interaction was made by one or many group members. The group profiles broke down the aspects of writing students discussed, and the intentions with which they discussed them, but they did not show the order in which they occurred. A conversation could have moved from supportive to critical, or vice versa, but the figures could not show this. A future study may be able to provide more details with different figures.

The profiles, as well as limited, were focused on criterion-based feedback, whereas Elbow (1981) encourages writers to use peer response groups for reader-based feedback. Rather than measuring criterion-based feedback, a future study could be done on the increase in intimacy among groups proportional to the time spent together and topics discussed, for example. Future studies

could also be done on students of a specific age, gender, or cultural background, or perhaps on a beginning or intermediate level class.

The surveys were sent to twelve academic ESOL programs, but it could have been that those more interested in peer response groups responded to the survey. Although 43% of the responding ESOL writing instructors find peer response groups useful, this may be an inaccurate picture of the ESOL profession as a whole.

Finally, the greatest difficulty with this study was that all six perspectives were obtained through the eyes of one person. Although I did my best to report the data without refraction, the study, like all qualitative studies, remains subjective and anecdotal.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ESOL WRITING CLASSES

Peer response groups appear to be useful in the ESOL classroom, and from all perspectives this study encourages ESOL writing instructors to include them in their curriculum. The study also implies some suggestions for their use.

In a study on peer response groups in two non-ESOL classrooms, Freedman (1992) found that students spent more than half of their time responding to questions on evaluation sheets they were given. In this ESOL classroom, students also spent much of their time responding to the questions their instructor had given them. They had, however, different interpretations of the questions. For example, some thought that "Is it convincing?" meant that they had to feel convinced, whereas others understood "convincing" to

mean "of a persuasive nature." The students did not respond to the longer, more semantically complicated questions, such as "Does something interfere with the message?" If an instructor gives students questions to respond to, it might be appropriate to discuss their meaning before dividing into groups, or to make the questions as few and simple as possible.

The majority of the ESOL students liked reading their writing aloud, although the surveys indicated that more instructors have their students read silently than aloud. Depending on the students and situation, this study encourages ESOL instructors to have their students read their writing aloud while in peer response groups.

Although many ESOL instructors report using peer response groups for criterion-based feedback, Elbow (1981) and a participant in a group which emphasized reader-based feedback describe this as the experience which encourages confidence, an acceptance of diverse writers, and expressive or poetic writing. Group 6, in which the students all participated as sharers and responders, had the most time and the least guidance, nearly met these expectations: the group members learned about each other and about their writing. All instructors must teach according to their own approach, but using peer response groups in ESOL writing classes, while modeling the roles of a good sharer and responder, appear to be in the interest of facilitating intercultural communication, confidence in student writers, and better writing.

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APPENDIX A

JACOBS ET AL'S (1981) ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE

ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE

STUDENT　　　　　　　　　　　　DATE　　　　　　　TOPIC

	SCORE	LEVEL	CRITERIA	COMMENTS
CONTENT		30-27	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** knowledgeable • substantive • thorough development of thesis • relevant to assigned topic	
		26-22	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** some knowledge of subject • adequate range • limited development of thesis • mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail	
		21-17	**FAIR TO POOR:** limited knowledge of subject • little substance • inadequate development of topic	
		16-13	**VERY POOR:** does not show knowledge of subject • non-substantive • not pertinent • OR not enough to evaluate	
ORGANIZATION		20-18	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive	
		17-14	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** somewhat choppy • loosely organized but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing	
		13-10	**FAIR TO POOR:** non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and development	
		9-7	**VERY POOR:** does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate	
VOCABULARY		20-18	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** sophisticated range • effective word/idiom choice and usage • word form mastery • appropriate register	
		17-14	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** adequate range • occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage *but meaning not obscured*	
		13-10	**FAIR TO POOR:** limited range • frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage • *meaning confused or obscured*	
		9-7	**VERY POOR:** essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate	
LANGUAGE USE		25-22	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** effective complex constructions • few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions	
		21-18	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions *but meaning seldom obscured*	
		17-11	**FAIR TO POOR:** major problems in simple/complex constructions • frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions • *meaning confused or obscured*	
		10-5	**VERY POOR:** virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • OR not enough to evaluate	
MECHANICS		5	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** demonstrates mastery of conventions • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing	
		4	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing *but meaning not obscured*	
		3	**FAIR TO POOR:** frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • *meaning confused or obscured*	
		2	**VERY POOR:** no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate	

TOTAL SCORE　　READER　　COMMENTS

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE HOLISTIC EVALUATIONS OF STUDENTS' ESSAYS

Beginning of Term: Hamoodei, Interrater 1

It has been over a year since I came here to the United States. When I first came I lived for five months with my friend who I have known before which made things alot easier for me, so he intruduced me to everything. Although he helped me alot, but that doesnt.mean he did everything for me. One important thing I reilasized is neve to depend on somebody in doing you'r things.

My friend what I'm going to tell you is baisiclaly the result of expeirince.

There are few important things you have to bring with you. First of all, bring the Arabic sintific books you have, so it would help you to understand the the similar in English. Also you should understand more sintific vocabularies. And you might use them in you'r last, because these book have the baiscs for everything.

Secondly you've got to be fully dependent on you'r self. You have to make all the calculations, so you wouldn't to borrow from anybody wich you can never find. Make sure you get everything you need by you'r own hands, because nobody as much as he or she is close to you she or he would never under-stand how important it is for you. I have expeirnced that many times, as a result lost very importan oportunties. Remember that being dependent means that you have you have to be <u>resposible,</u> toward you'r self or toward other people. Doing unresposible moves, would cause a lot of problems, and you might fail in you'r life, so never <u>do</u> things you don't think about the consequenses sciniesly.

One more important last thing, when you come here the first things to do is to understand the society, and the studing system

If you get to know how to deal with the instructors that might let them understand that you are a scinios student, because most of professors think of them as not. Furthermore if you the nigh in the school when exams or so that would save a lot of time. On the otherhand if you under stand the behavior, manners, and culture of the people here that would make avoid alot of problems. When you <u>understand</u> how they think, you wouldn't be upset of things people said, and they didn't mean it to you.

Any way that all were from my own experience and I <u>advice</u> you to think of what I said very carfuly, so you wouldn't have any <u>trouble</u> when you first come here.

C - 21   √- 12   (66)
O - 14   LU-16
       · M- 3

content: 21

org: 14

voc: 12

lang: 17

mech: 2

66

   It has been over a year since I came here to the United States.
When I first came I lived for five months with my friend who I have
known before which made things alot easier for me, so he intruduced
me to everything. Although he helped me alot, but that doesnt mean
he did everything for me. One important thing I reilasized is neve to
depend on somebody in doing you'r things.
   My friend what I'm going to tell you is baisiclaly the result of
expeirince.
   There are few important things you have to bring with you.
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help you to understand the the similar in English. Also you should
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you'r last, because these book have the baiscs for everything.
   Secondly you've got to be fully dependent on you'r self. You
have to make all the calculations, so you wouldn't to borrow from
anybody wich you can never find. Make sure you get everything you
need by you'r own hands, because nobody as much as he or she is
close to you she or he would never under-stand how important it is
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people. Doing unresposible moves, would cause a lot of problems,
and you might fail in you'r life, so never do things you don't think
about the consequenses sciniesiy.
   One more important last thing, when you come here the first
things to do is to understand the society, and the studing system
   If you get to know how to deal with the instructors that might
let them understand that you are a scinios student, because most of
professors think of them as not. Furthermore if you the nigh in the
school when exams or so that would save a lot of time. On the
otherhand if you under stand the behavior, manners, and culture of
the people here that would make avoid alot of problems. When you
understand how they think, you wouldn't be upset of things people
said, and they didn't mean it to you.
   Any way that all were from my own experience and I advice
' you to think of what I said very carfuly, so you wouldn't have any
trouble when you first come here.

Beginning of Term: Eri, Interrater 1

I have a best friend in my home town. After a couple of weeks, she will be in the United States for studying. I have many experienced of bad things and good things, so I would like to advise her many things. But, I like to emphasize one thing. I want my best friend to become independent.

In America, most of the students do not act in a group all day long. I am not saying American students do not hang around, they do hang around. I mean they hand around on purpose. For example, they hang around to study, or going out somewhere. If they want to do different thing, they breakup that day, then they will meet some day again when they want to do something each other. What I want to say is do not hang around without any purpose. Sometimes it is good to hang around, just be there for nothing special to do. But not all the time. In Japan, they hang around all the time, that is meaningless.

Second, do not rely on your friends too much. You have to try by yourself first, and then if you still need friend's help, go ahead and ask for it. Maybe your friends will help you. But your friend will not help you if you have not tried by yourself first. That will be good practice try to solve your own problem by yourself. After you tried really hard then still need your friends' help your friends are happy to help you. Important thing is try to do by yourself, do not rely on your friends too much.

Third, do not be shy. You should speak English anywhere in the United States, so if you are shy it is hard to make friends. I was shy too when I came to the United States. Then I tried to be not shy really hard and my life have changed. I speak English to do most of things by myself and I could make lots of friends.

I know it is really difficult to be independence and also lot of responsibility to be independence. But, I want my best friend to become independence go through many experiences.

C - 21
O - 17   74
V - 14
LV - 18
M - 4

Beginning of Term: Eri, Interrater 2

I have a best friend in my home town. After a couple of weeks, she will be in the United States for studying. I have many experienced of bad things and good things, so I would like to advise her many things. But, I like to emphasize one thing. I want my best friend to become independent.

In America, most of the students do not act in a group all day long. I am not saying American students do not hang around, they do hang around. I mean they hand around on purpose. For example, they hang around to study, or going out somewhere. If they want to do different thing, they breakup that day, then they will meet some day again when they want to do something each other. What I want to say is do not hang around without any purpose. Sometimes it is good to hang around, just be there for nothing special to do. But not all the time. In Japan, they hang around all the time, that is meaningless.

Second, do not rely on your friends too much. You have to try by yourself first, and then if you still need friend's help, go ahead and ask for it. Maybe your friends will help you. But your friend will not help you if you have not tried by yourself first. That will be good practice try to solve your own problem by yourself. After you tried really hard then still need your friends' help your friends are happy to help you. Important thing is try to do by yourself, do not rely on your friends too much.

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content: 30
org: 20
voc: 18
lang: 21
mech: 5
      ——
      94

I have a best friend in my home town. After a couple of weeks, she will be in the United States for studying. I have many experienced of bad things and good things, so I would like to advise her many things. But, I like to emphasize one thing. I want my best friend to become independent.

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Content   23
Organization -15
Vocabulary - 17
Language   - 19
Mechanics - 4

(75)

Listen carefully to me, all of my Thai friends who are preparing to come to America with a goal to study here. This is a voice from your friend in the U.S. who came here before you and learned that how sad it is not knowing about all these things before. Please take my advice that if you plan to study in the he United States, you should have a large amount of money--really.

Money is a big deal here in America. you cannot survive here without money. In our home-Thailand-people may help you for free such as giving you food, providing you place to live, driving you to somewhere, or parking for free. Bu those events will never occur here in the United States-where every machine goes by money. You need to understand this quite well, my friends. The American are different from us. However, I am not saying that they have no heart. In fact, they are so kind to us. But for some reasons, their lives depend mainly on money.

First of all, the American work hard to gain money. They use their thoughts, labors, and time very much in working. They mostly try their best to do their jobs. Not many Americans work for fun or in leisure time like some Thai people do. They take their jobs serious. Every drop of their sweat means their quality. And their quality means money they will earn. Since money is hard to gain, it's natural that they pay much attention to money. We cannot blame them for that truth.

Secondly, money offers the American people to live luxurious lives. They do not wash clothes and dishes with their hands, that's why they need washer/dryer and dish washing machines. They eat frozen food, that's why they need big freezers and microwaves. They drink fruit juices, that's why they need the fruit extractors. Every important places are far from each other, that's why they need cars. They love watching television, that's why they become members of cable T.V. And certainly, all of these modern devices cost a lot of money.

In conclusion, you should be well prepared for money to study in America. Everything here is expensive- much much more expensive than in Thailand. Be sure to have a lot of money in your bank before coming here. As long as you have your purses filled with money, studying here is very much pleasant.

C - 27   LU - 22   (90)
O   18   M - 5
V   18

content: 30
org: 20
voc: 20
lang: 25
mech: 5
 ___
 100

Listen carefully to me, all of my Thai friends who are preparing to come to America with a goal to study here. This is a voice from your friend in the U.S. who came here before you and learned that how sad it is not knowing about all these things before. Please take my advice that if you plan to study in the he United States, you should have a large amount of money--really.

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In conclusion, you should be well prepared for money to study in America. Everything here is expensive- much much more expensive than in Thailand. Be sure to have a lot of money in your bank before coming here. As long as you have your purses filled with money, studying here is very much pleasant.

I was born in Qatar where it's sunny all about the year, even if it rains some times we would never miss the golden sun whic I do really miss now so much.

Qatar is penciola whic takes position on the Arabian Gulf (Persian Gulf). For this reason it has an astonishing beaches at all different parts on the coast, specially out sick the capital such as Al-garya beach, Dokhan, Or-sáeed. All different kinds of activeties are being practiced on the beach, like swiming, playing, and running. On the other hand, because of it's gegrafical position, fishing is a lang field for buisness and sport. Being in a gulf whic there is no strong currents, lake of food, and no danger on the fish eggs, gives the fish the aportunty to get more, and more.

The my serious sand have always made think deeper, space out with my dreams flying away from what I want to forget. Once we were going to nice area, but I have never felt the distance on the time, and when got there it was like I'm in a dream , but a living dream. After built our tent on one of the dyones under a full moon we went to swim. however we reived the sea would lighten our movments, and I could say the craps and fish swimming dawon their in the middle of the night. The name of that place was Khor-Al-Odiad it's wonder don't you ever miss it.

If you want to go there I advice to use the specially for us.

C 20
O 13
V - 11   ⑥2
LU - 15
M - 3

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If you want to go there I advice to use the specially for us.

content: 16
org: 10
local: 12
lang: 11
mech: 3
              52

End of Term: Eri, Interrater 1

My country, Japan, has many traveler from foreign countries. Many people have some kind of trouble about Japanese culture. I have many advices, but especially, I would like to say study Japanese culture as much as posible.

In Japan, most of Japanese take off shoes when they enter their house. Some people are Americanized so they don't take off their shoes, but most of Japanese do. Now many foreigners know about this but some of them don't know about this. Japanese keep their house clean all the time so if somebody didn't take off their shoes, it makes dirty, and also makes people pre mad. So I want them to know this custom.

In Japan, Japanese have different custom about taking a bath from foreigner, especially European and American. In Japan, their bathroom is little bit bigger than foreigners because, they have a little space beside the bathtub. That space is use for wash and clean the body before they soaked into the bathtub, and every family members use same water at most of Japanese house. But foreigners are different. They wash and clean their body in the bathtub and change the water every time. This is big different thing about bath. Washing and cleaning their body outside of the bathtub or inside of the bathtub. So I want them to know about his custom also.

Finally, In Japan, we have many ways of talk to people and Japanese don't boast of oneself. When Japanese talk to younger people, same age, and older people, we talk differently. We don't talk friendly to older people most of the time. We have to respect them. American and European people talk same, it doesn't matter the age of people. In Japan, we really care about way of talk, and Japanese people don't boast oneself. It is ashamed to do that. This is a difference of culture. Some country, it is all right to boast oneself, but not in my country. So I want them to know about this custom also.

It is fun to travel to many countries, but if they didn't study the culture which you are going to tavel is difficult. My advice is study the culture as much as possible that would help you and people who are living in that country.

C-27
O-18   M-4   (86)
V-17
LV-20

End of Term: Eri, Interrater 2

content: **28**

org: **20.**

17

voc:

lang: **21**

mech $\frac{5}{91}$

　　My country, Japan, has many traveler from foreign countries.
Many people have some kind of trouble about Japanese culture. I
have many advices, but especially, I would like to say study
Japanese culture as much as posible.

　　In Japan, most of Japanese take off shoes when they enter
their house. Some people are Americanized so they don't take off
their shoes, but most of Japanese do. Now many foreigners know
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age of people. In Japan, we really care about way of talk, and
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oneself, but not in my country. So I want them to know about this
custom also.

　　It is fun to travel to many countries, but if they didn't study
the culture which you are going to tavel is difficult. My advice is
study the culture as much as possible that would help you and people
who are living in that country.

End of Term: Dao, Interrater 1

Thailand, my country, is a very wonderful place to visit. A lot of interesting things are lying there quietly waiting for everyone to discover. With its lush rain-forests, bright sunshine, clear blue sky, and rich historical places, Thailand offer all visitors the unforgetable experiences. The only thing for the visitors to keep in mind is the fact that Thailand is a hot and humid country located near the equator line of the world. Therefore, be well prepared for the hot climate and all incidents involving with humidity, if you plan to visit Thailand.

Travelling in Thailand requires light, soft, and comfortable clothes. You may learn to your surprise that how easy it is for your shirts to get wet. When in hot country, sweat is like our close friend. It can easily come out of your body even though not much energy is used. You will need to take a shower three times a day and wash your clothes very often. The lighter and the softer your clothes are, the more comfortable you feel. And to feel comfortable is the most important thing for travellers to enjoy their trips.

Visitors need to adjust themselves to Thailand's hot and humid climate. Water is like a god while mosquitos are like devils. Due to the hot weather, people often feel thirsty. Thai people drink fresh water very often. Fortunately, we have a lot of rivers and canals throughout the country. So, water is easily to find--it's in everywhere. Without water we may not survive. That's why, for Thai people, water is like their god. On the other hand, mosquitos are the most disgusting enemy of Thai people. The scene of people wearing short pants and short skirts is hard to find. However, very often, we will see people with their arms and necks full of red spots, a result from the mosquito bites. Thus, every kind of medicine that protects or cure the mosquito-bites is something to be seriously considered. But these troubles are not enough to scare people to dwell in Thailand. The number of fantastic things overcome those of problems, of course.

In summary, if you find yourself ready for dealing with the hotness and the humidity in Thailand, do come to it and you will never feel disappointed as long as you wear comfortable clothes and carry the anti-mosquito medicines with yourself.

C - 28
O - 19   LU - 22   92
V - 18   M - 5

End of Term: Dao, Interrater 2

       Thailand, my country, is a very wonderful place to visit. A lot of interesting things are lying there quietly waiting for everyone to discover. With its lush rain-forests, bright sunshine, clear blue sky, and rich historical places, Thailand offer all visitors the unforgetable experiences. The only thing for the visitors to keep in mind is the fact that Thailand is a hot and humid country located near the equator line of the world. Therefore, be well prepared for the hot climate and all incidents involving with humidity, if you plan to visit Thailand.

       Travelling in Thailand requires light, soft, and comfortable clothes. You may learn to your surprise that how easy it is for your shirts to get wet. When in hot country, sweat is like our close friend. It can easily come out of your body even though not much energy is used. You will need to take a shower three times a day and wash your clothes very often. The lighter and the softer your clothes are, the more comfortable you feel. And to feel comfortable is the most important thing for travellers to enjoy their trips.

       Visitors need to adjust themselves to Thailand's hot and humid climate. Water is like a god while mosquitos are like devils. Due to the hot weather, people often feel thirsty. Thai people drink fresh water very often. Fortunately, we have a lot of rivers and canals throughout the country. So, water is easily to find--it's in everywhere. Without water we may not survive. That's why, for Thai people, water is like their god. On the other hand, mosquitos are the most disgusting enemy of Thai people. The scene of people wearing short pants and short skirts is hard to find. However, very often, we will see people with their arms and necks full of red spots, a result from the mosquito bites. Thus, every kind of medicine that protects or cure the mosquito-bites is something to be seriously considered. But these troubles are not enough to scare people to dwell in Thailand. The number of fantastic things overcome those of problems, of course.

       In summary, if you find yourself ready for dealing with the hotness and the humidity in Thailand, do come to it and you will never feel disappointed as long as you wear comfortable clothes and carry the anti-mosquito medicines with yourself.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH A STUDENT

.

*I was interested, Hamoodei and Nicolae told you that you needed
more numbers--*
Oh, that's the clue. I take it as a clue. I tell myself that, oh, they
want me to convince them, they don't want to know why I chose this.
I have to maintain my own style. I don't like a lot of numbers,
because I think it is dull. It sounds like scientific paper, I don't like
it.

*One criticism that some teachers have about students talking about
their writing like this is that one student can give bad advice, and
then the other student will change everything. Do you feel like you
can decide if the advice is good or bad?*
One thing for sure, I have my own style. I will not allow others to
affect my style of writing. And, I will take their advice only if it
really makes sense. Because, I know, we have to look at it from
different angles. But, I have to maintain my own style.

*On the second paper, the one about visiting countries, first Wendi
said he didn't like that, and then Nicolae told you it was important,
and Wendi changed his mind. I was curious, if only Wendi had been
there, would you have taken out the mosquitoes?*
It will stay. (laughs) But, perhaps I can delete some sentences, and
include everything in a short sentence.

*And listening to Wendi's paper, your comment was for him to talk
more about the food. Why did you choose this comment, to make?*
Um, I think, some adjectives need to be clarified. It is delicious I
know, but how delicious it is, so that I will prepare myself, because
I had an experience. The food in Burma, they said, delicious. And I
looked forward to eating delicious food in my opinion. Then it turn
out to be very very hot. Very very spicy. Too spicy. Too hot. And
they eat raw food. Like egg. They don't boil, they don't fry, they just
add chili and eat it! I cannot believe it. This, this is delicious? So,
I think he should clarify it because of this experience.

What was your opinion about this class?
Actually I love this class, because, it's easy-going, it's not
stressful, and it offers me a lot of chances to improve my writing
skills. Usually I myself have to be forced, I will not force myself to
do this if nobody force me. I just want the teacher to guide, want
somebody to grade, I always appreciate my words.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

.

Why did you use Turpania, and other group activities?
I wanted the students to have something to write about, something based on experience and not just the text. Something that they created themselves. I like group work when there's an information gap. When there's an information gap, to complete the assignment students actually have to do communication. I don't like it just to be vogue.

At the beginning of the term, you were optimistic about these particular students. How do they seem in retrospect?
At the time, I didn't feel as positive about the class as I do now. I had a few doubts in the beginning, but I thought that the group work stuff went really well. I wish I hadn't assigned such a long novel. But I was really pleased with their term papers. Wendi actually took stuff that we'd been doing in the groups and created a paper out of it. I didn't like Ling's business pamphlet, but she's creating it for her business. I like people writing in their fields, not about things they don't know about. The purpose is not for me to enjoy their papers, it doesn't really matter.

I was curious what you noticed about the students' writing before and after they discussed their writing.
On their university project, I was kind of disappointed with their first drafts. Their second drafts were certainly better -- and longer. And then the writing at the end, on "advice," was clearly much better than the first time they wrote on advice.

The only thing you really corrected for spelling and grammar on to a great extent was the final paper. Why?
I did some little things. The things I noticed someone doing over and over I mentioned. But I try not to appropriate the text.

Many ESOL teachers have students put their chairs in a circle, but you never did that.
I don't do that, unless it's necessary for the activity. I would rather let the students sit where they want to sit. I didn't put them in circles, but I always put them in different culture groups. There are activities where I'll make the students get in a circle, but I don't think it's necessary to do it each and every time. In this case, when we weren't doing group work, it was basically lecture. I like to pick my spot in the classroom, and I assume the students are the same.

APPENDIX E

LIST OF SYMBOLS USED TO TRANSCRIBE AUDIO RECORDINGS OF PEER
RESPONSE GROUPS

SYMBOLS FOR TRANSCRIBING AUDIO RECORDINGS

Symbol	Meaning
Italic	Reading directly from writing
(.)	Small pause
.x	x second pause
Underline	Simultaneous speech
CAPITALS	Loud voice

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPTS EVALUATED FOR INTERRATER RELIABILITY

Group 5

II.B — B5: Let's go to B2's. 1
II.B — B3: B2 1
   — B8: (unintelligible) o
II.B   B5: Yeah let's just pick on B2. 1
II.C.1 — B8: Your paper's bad. 1
   — B2: (laughs) 1
   — B8: Um- 1
II.F — B5: Off the record, Karin. 1
   — B+: (All laugh) -
     B8: Yeah for your paper, I think you were really straight forward,
II.C.1.a   you know, for example, you started "I perfer going. ." It's like you
     were answering a question, you know. You didn't even get to
     (unintelligible), you just said, campus life, and then I prefer going to
     this school in this state to study in the U.S. I will think much of the
     environment and of campus life. And that's what I asked you. I told
     you you don't want to think about the state, and you told me no, you
     just want to (unintelligible), so how come you're gonna, you, you
     think about the environment and you don't even know what is the
     state looks like- 6
I.D.4.a — B2: Um, I think that environment is a nice school- 1
II.E.2.c — B8: You mean the social life on campus- 1
   — B2: Yes. 1
     B8: That's, that's that's understandable but the way you which you
     brought it here, is you meant that the enviroment is C, and there's A,
     um, so, and then her thing is you know, you didn't write any topic
     sentence, which is kinda, I prefer going like somebody else curious,
II.E.   where you prefer to go. So, I think, you need to uh topic sentence,
     say, for example going to the United States, or choosing a school in
     the United States, is not as easy as everybody thinks, choosing school,
II.E.1.a   in order to , you have to think about the social life on campus, the
     um, for example the um programs they provide, and 2
   — B2: (unintelligible) o
II.E.1.b — B8: Uh, and then at first you give introduction to the reader, the kind
     about, uh, you just fake, you know about school- 1
   — B2: (laughs) 4
II.E.1.b — B5: She's like I mean she's like writing like the second paragraph- 1
     B8: It's like you know what, if you give an American reader, who's
     gonna read this do you know what he's gonna think about? He's
II.E.1.a   gonna think about this is a (unintelligible). He's gonna feel like this
     (sound of crumpling paper) he's gonna wad up the piece of paper. Do
     you understand what I'm saying? 4

Participation

B2	B3	B5	B8
4	1	4	16

Group 5

II-B   - B5: Let's go to B2's. /

I-B   - B3: B2 . |

—   - B8: (unintelligible) o

II B   B5: Yeah let's just pick on B2. |

II-C-1.   -B8: Your paper's bad./

—   - B2: (laughs) |

—   - B8: Um- |

II.F   -B5: Off the record, Karin. |

—   - B+: (All laugh)

II-C-1-a   - B8: Yeah for your paper, I think you were really straight forward, you know, for example, you started "I perfer going. ." It's like you were answering a question, you know. You didn't even get to (unintelligible), you just said, campus life, and then I prefer going to this school in this state to study in the U.S. I will think much of the environment and of campus life. And that's what I asked you. I told you you don't want to think about the state, and you told me no, you just want to (unintelligible), so how come you're gonna, you, you think about the environment and you don't even know what is the state looks like- 6

I d-4-a   - B2: Um, I think that environment is a nice school- |

II-E-2-a   -B8: You mean the social life on campus- |

  - B2: Yes. |

II-E-1-b   -B8: That's, that's that's understandable but the way you which you brought it here, is you meant that the envionment is C, and there's A, um, so, and then her thing is you know, you didn't write any topic sentence, which is kinda, I prefer going like somebody else curious, where you prefer to go. So, I think, you need to uh topic sentence,

II-E-1-a   say, for example going to the United States, or choosing a school in the United States, is not as easy as everybody thinks, choosing school, in order to , you have to think about the social life on campus, the um, for example the um programs they provide, and 2

  - B2: (unintelligible)

II-E-1-b   - B8: Uh, and then at first you give introduction to the reader, the kind about, uh, you just fake, you know about <u>school</u>- |

  - B2: (laughs) |

II-E-1-b   - B5: <u>She's</u> like I mean she's like writing like the second para<u>graph</u>- |

II-E-1-a   - B8: <u>It's</u> like you know what, if you give an American reader, who's gonna read this do you know what he's gonna think about? He's gonna think about this is a (unintelligible). He's gonna feel like this (sound of crumpling paper) he's gonna wad up the piece of paper. Do you understand what I'm saying? 4

$$\frac{B_2}{4} \qquad \frac{B_2}{1} \qquad \frac{B_5}{4} \qquad \frac{B_8}{5}$$

Group 6

II.E.4.a — B7: <u>This is</u> uh, uh, good information. About food, ok, 2 ✓

— B6: (laughs) 1 ✓

I. D.4.a — B5: It just really crossed my mind, you know- 1 ✓

II.F — B7: About food- 1 ✓

II.E.2.a < B6: But, one thing about food, is, that it is good? right, it is delicious.
How good is it? 3 ✓

II.F — B7: You can go there and try. 1 .

I.O.3.c — B5: (laughs) Explain delicious food. 2 .

— B6: I don't know, when I- 1 ,

II.E.3.C — B7: You like very much. This is delicious. 2 ✓

— B5: Yeah, delicious. 1 ✓

II.E.1.a < B6: I don't know, um, when I, when I read, I just would like to know
more about it-   1 ✓

I. D.1.a — B5: Oooooo, so how do, how, I should more explain about the food. 2 .

B6: I don't know maybe I just like, if this the right thing or not but I

II.E.1.a < think something need to be completed here. I think when you say
that your food is good, I would like to know- 2 ✓

- B5: What is- 1 ✓

· B7: And why, 1 ,

- B6: How- 1 ✓

- B7: Why- 1 ✓

- B6: So that I would like, I, I- 1 ✓

B5: I was thinking about, yeah, but I don't know how to explain the

I.D.4.a < food, you know. 1 .

B7: Yeah, for me for example I understood, when for example, he

II.E.3.a < wrote here its Italian. It's ok, I understood, what kind of food.
Because, um- 3 .

II.E.2.a , B6: I just would like to know, is it hot, is it spicy, or, um, is it like
Italian food-   1 ✓

- B7: Uh huh- 1 ,

- B5: No, yeah- 1 ,

II.E.2.a < B6: -you eat a lot of cheese, or something like that, so that I prepare
myself--(laughs)--ok, it's ok, I <u>know that I will</u> 2 .

I.O.1.a , B5: <u>Uh</u>, ok, I will give you that menus, like, coco-Thai or something is
coconut, 1 ,

- B6; Yeah- 1 ✓

- B5: -milk, or something- 2 ,

II.E.1.a , B6: Yeah, just a little of it then I will prepare myself what kind of
food, will I be confronted with- 2 ✓

II.E.1.a B7: Yeah, it's ok, you're right- 1 .

II.E.4.a B6: But it's all right, like this- 2 .

Participation

B5	B6	B7
10	16	13

Interrater 2, Group 6

Group 6

II-E-4-a   B7: <u>This is</u> uh, uh, good information. About food, ok, 2

—   — B6: (laughs)

I-D-4-a   B5: It just really crossed my mind, you know- |

II- F — B7: About food- |

II-E-2-a — B6: But, one thing about food, is, that it is good? right, it is delicious.
How good is it? 3

II-F — B7: You can go there and try. |

I-d-3-c B5: (laughs) Explain delicious food. 2

— B6: I don't know, when I- |

II-E-3-C- B7: You like very much. This is delicious. 2

— — B5: Yeah, delicious. |

II-E-1-a -B6: I don't know, um, when I, when I read, I just would like to know
more about it- |

I-d-1-a — B5: Oooooo, so how do, how, I should more explain about the food.

II-e-1-a -B6: I don't know maybe I just like, if this the right thing or not but I
think something need to be completed here. I think when you say
that your food is good, I would like to know- 2

— B5: What is- |

-B7: And why, |

-B6: How- |

-B7: Why- |

-B6: So that I would like, I, I- |

I-d-1-a — B5: I was thinking about, yeah, but I don't know how to explain the
food, you know. |

II-E-1-a — B7: Yeah, for me for example I understood, when for example, he
wrote here its Italian. It's ok, I understood, what kind of food. 3
Because, um- 3

II-E-2-a   B6: I just would like to know, is it hot, is it spicy, or, um, is it like
Italian food- |

— B7: Uh huh- |

— B5: No, yeah- |

II-i-2-a — B6: -you eat a lot of cheese, or something like that, so that I prepare
myself--(laughs)--ok, it's ok, I <u>know that I will</u> 2

I-d-1-a — B5: <u>Uh</u>, ok, I will give you that menus, like, coco-Thai or something is
coconut, |

— B6; Yeah- |

— B5: -milk, or something- |

II-E-1-a — B6: Yeah, just a little of it then I will prepare myself what kind of
food, will I be confronted with- |

II-E-1-a — B7: Yeah, it's ok, you're right- |

II-E-4-a — B6: But it's all right, like this- |

$$\frac{B5}{10} - \frac{B6}{16} - \frac{B7}{13}$$

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE ENTRIES IN JOURNAL FROM THE UPPER DIVISION REQUIRED
ENGLISH WRITING CLASS AND PEER RESPONSE GROUPS

██████ began by explaining that
we were trying to pretend that we
weren't in school.
      Talked about how children can write,
draw, but we can't. Described
                    beginning
                    transition
                        got it
stages. We are in the transition, himself
too. Otherwise he'd be rich.

we had our first peer meeting today. I spent
awhile thinking about what to write — these are
all people who were born in foreign
cultures; how many of the implications
that I give will they get? I thought
about writing about Africa — no, they'll
think I want to impress them — or
the bus experience — no, they'll be
offended at my sarcasm. Finally I
started on the tangled story that the
map got me going on — it started
out a happy story about horses, but
somehow my pen didn't let it stay
that way.
      Then I became nervous. Suppose my
story goes over their heads, or depresses
them, or suppose one of them is a
Christian and wants to tell me that
there are 'answers,' always.

life ████ read, she wrote about her
as compared to Homer's paintings
of a Black man on a sinking rowboat.
For me, it was a very moving
piece. I could hardly speak when she
finished. It suddenly affirmed my
belief that these groups will be meaning-
ful — she was willing to share so
much with people she hardly knew

Class.

Rhetorical questions—
   What's the capital of Oregon? – Salem – right.
   How's the Turkey? – Good – right.
   (you would kick someone out who did this?)
Mentioned that he deliberately used the
pronoun 'they' – non-sexist!
Trying to pop the bubble of
right and wrong writing –
   Books give examples of how not
   to do things. Could a cookbook
do this?
   Usually means everyone is
doing it. (sociolinguistics)
   Punctuation is supposed to help clarity.
      Greek → Roman → notion that there
                  is one kind of grammar
                  and it's perfect.

ESL. Today I go, yesterday I go.
   "future English." Inflections –
      they will come.

Last read around. Some essays
are deep and powerful, other
superficial class essays. This was
good just to group and hear one
lengthen things. I'm finding more
and more joy in simply writing
for people without being critiqued
Experience with ▓▓▓▓ reading and
being so hurt from criticism different
than group – I can count
on them to support me,
trying to relate essays, ▓▓▓▓
them and us together.

APPENDIX H

SAMPLE ESSAY SHARED WITH THE PEER RESPONSE GROUP IN THE
UPPER DIVISION REQUIRED ENGLISH WRITING·CLASS

Visiting the Crab Sorcerer

One weekend, Nancy drove out to the village where my fiancé and I were living -- I had been in Cameroon for almost three years. Nancy was seeing one of our friends, Lawan, and it was actually Lawan who had driven her to visit us. He was a little older, and had an important job in the city. We were trying our best to make them comfortable. Abdou and Lawan had gone to the mosque to pray, and we had eaten chicken, which Abdou had killed earlier in the day. The neighbors sent over food too, just in case. After dinner, we sat and talked. Our conversations usually centered on Nancy, the kind of person that is so easy to tease--nice, good-humored, forever trapping herself with her own tongue.

Saturday morning we tried to think of what to do. Normally we would go on a hike, but Lawan wasn't the hiking type. Since they had a car, we decided to visit another village: Rhumsiki. It was about 60 kilometers from Koza, where we lived, but since we had no transportation I had never been there.

Rhumsiki is well-known in Cameroon because it is in a large valley of volcanic plugs. The dirt roads bump their way around these extraordinary monoliths to this village in their midst. The village caters to European tourists, so the local people try to interest outsiders in the potter's hut, blacksmith's forge, basket weaving -- and their sorcerer. In Koza, where we lived, the first three items were part of every day life. No one would pay to see these. But the fourth-- I had been trying to get an appointment with a sorcerer in Koza for several months, but it was a complicated procedure with a lot of protocol, and I wasn't sure if it was really going to happen before I left. I guessed that this Rhumsikian sorcerer was probably a fake, since it was clear he was accustomed to tourists and would certainly ask for money. Nevertheless, I was interested in the experience, and Lawan, Nancy, and Abdou agreed to go. And so we went.

We followed the sorcerer's publicity agent through a small doorway and into an open courtyard in the middle of the ring of huts. The compounds here seemed very similar to those in Koza-- one main entrance into the men's quarters, which opened onto a large sandy space in the middle of the circle of women's and children's huts. The latter could only leave by passing through the men's space. This sandy inner ring, shaded by hung woven mats, was where the family

members passed their time. The messenger presented us to the sorcerer, an old man in torn clothes seated in the white sand. We sat on some pieces of wood and old gasoline containers. I felt awkward to be at a greater height than a man, and avoided looking at the sorcerer's eyes. Instead I stared down at his cracked bare feet and chipped toenails.

He asked us what we wanted to know. We laughed. The men looked at Nancy and I -- it wasn't well accepted for them, as Muslims, to be visiting a sorcerer. They were humoring us: we should ask the questions. Nancy proposed that the sorcerer tell us about our futures. He called out in Kapsiki, the local language, and a child brought him a small yellow calabash covered with a woven lid, and a small string instrument and bow. He took them from the child, removed the lid from the calabash and set it in the sand between his feet. The calabash was half-filled with sand, and on top of the sand were shell fragments and pieces of bark. Crawling around inside was a small black crab.

The sorcerer picked up the crab, and arranged the objects in the calabash into a pattern. Then he put the crab on them, spit on it several times, and covered it with the lid. He picked up his instrument and played, singing in Kapsiki. The music was eerie. After a minute he stopped, lifted the lid of the calabash and looked at Nancy. "Vous rentrez chez vous, mais le coeur, il reste ici," he said to her in French. "C'est possible, revenir." Nancy and Lawan looked at each other and laughed. I thought that the sorcerer was probably a smart man. Two couples arrive at his house, and want to know about the future. "Your heart will remain here, and you too may return." What would you tell them, if you wanted a good tip?

Lawan was told that he would be wealthy, but must be careful about his friends. The others nodded; my skepticism increased. The sorcerer repeated the crab ritual. He scrutinized me, and then said "Vous mariez un Camerounais, et vous donnez deux enfants. Et on vous enterre ici, au Cameroun." The others laughed and teased me at the mention of marriage and children. I was a little surprized. Marriage and children, sure, but I hadn't expected him to mention my death. I wanted to live here, did I want to die here? Finally he began with Abdou. He spit on the crab, played and sang, and then studied the pieces of shell and wood in the calabash. Then he looked up at Abdou slowly and chuckled. The rest of us looked at each other, wondering. This time he spoke in Fulfuldé, the trade language. "Rewbe yidi maa." WHAT! I thought. "Women like you?" Lawan began

to laugh along with the sorcerer. The sorcerer motioned straight ahead with his hands, then wagged his head pointedly from side to side, still grinning. "Achu yirlugo giite." .

Lawan and Abdou were falling off their stools with laughter, and Nancy was smiling with them. Very funny, I thought. You polygamists, you keep laughing. I refused to look at the sorcerer's face throughout the rest of the time. As we got into Lawan's car, I turned to Abdou. "Why did he speak to you in Fulfuldé, when he used French with everyone else? What is this about rewbe, rewbe?" Abdou shrugged, and Lawan threw back his head, laughing hard. I got into the back seat and stared out the window of the car.

Lawan and Nancy had to go back to the city, so they left us twenty kilometers from Koza. They had thought we could get a ride, but we knew better. We started the walk back. It is easy to ride next to someone in a car without speaking, but the walk to Koza was normally about four hours. Walking in silence is difficult. You meet people, and have to greet them, because you're not angry at them. Small children accompany you for short stretches of the way, and do funny things. After some kilometers of silence, I again asked for an explanation. "It was just advice," said Abdou. "I don't know why he spoke Fulfuldé. He told me not to look at women, to only look straight ahead, not left or right. What's wrong with that?"

As I said, twenty kilometers is a long distance. By the time we neared Koza, we were laughing and talking. At home, we took baths, ate the rest of the chicken, and slept under a half moon, in peace.