California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

2009

A critical analysis of L1 and L2 composition scholarship on instructor feedback

Danny Elbar Marenco

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project

Part of the Education Commons, and the First and Second Language Acquisition Commons

Recommended Citation

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF L1 AND L2

COMPOSITION SCHOLARSHIP ON

INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK

_____

A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

English Composition:

Teaching English as a Second Language

_____

by

Danny Elbar Marenco

September 2009

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF L1 AND L2

COMPOSITION SCHOLARSHIP ON

INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK

A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

by

Danny Elbar Marenco

September 2009

Approved by:

Sunny Hyon, Chair, English

8-25-09
Date

Sunny Hyon, Graduate Coordinator

Jacqueline Rhodes

ABSTRACT

Scholars in the field of Composition Studies have acknowledged that both mainstream and English as a Second Language (ESL) composition instructors need to be aware of the needs of L1 and L2 students, as well as those in between, sometimes called Generation 1.5 students. Being prepared to work with these student populations involves awareness of how to respond to their writing. Little work has analyzed and compared L1 and L2 composition research on instructor feedback in order to ascertain what the bodies of scholarship suggest regarding practices that are helpful for both L1 and L2 student populations, and where the different populations can benefit from different feedback practices. This thesis presents a critical analysis of L1 and L2 composition scholarship on instructor feedback. Specifically, this study focuses on what the scholarship indicates about students' attitudes toward instructor feedback and strategies of instructor feedback.

The results indicate that L1 writing students may resist feedback on their writing. However, there is some research in L1 that suggests the opposite. On the contrary, L2 research indicates that L2 students appreciate, expect, and apply the feedback given to them by their teachers.

Generation 1.5 students also appreciate and expect feedback from their instructors. Furthermore, for the most part, L1 research constructs instructors as "coaches" using different strategies to dialogue with the students, and seems most concerned with global issues pertaining to content, organization, and ideas. L2 research, on the other hand, has a stronger emphasis on instructors' sentence-level error feedback strategies. Considering both of these bodies of scholarship will give instructors a better understanding of strategies for addressing the needs of each one of the groups represented in their classroom.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my First Reader, Professor Sunny Hyon, and Secondary Reader, Professor Jackie Rhodes. I would like to give a special thanks to Professor Hyon for helping me in one of the most challenging tasks in my life – my thesis. Professor Hyon truly typifies the concept of "teacher." Her knowledge, genuine care, and guidance got me through the challenging process of developing my thesis.

I dedicate this thesis to my wife, Sara. She told me not to quit when quitting at times seemed so easy to do. Thank you for your support in this very difficult task in my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In his 2006 article "The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in U.S. College Composition," Paul Kei Matsuda discusses how composition classrooms have traditionally geared themselves to serve a monolingual student population and have marginalized ethno-linguistically diverse groups. According to Matsuda, actual composition classes do not reflect this myth of linguistic homogeneity, and writing instructors thus need to be ready for diverse student populations in their classrooms. In an earlier article, Matsuda (2003) also points out that both mainstream and English as a Second Language (ESL) composition instructors need to be aware of the needs of L1 and L2 students, as well as those in between, sometimes called Generation 1.5 students. Harklau, Losey, and Siegal (1999), drawing on Rumbaut and Ima (1988) describe Generation 1.5 students as "immigrants who arrive to the United States as school-age children or adolescents, and share characteristics of both first and second generation" (p. 4). Matsuda (2003) states that:

. . . the presence of Generation 1.5 students in colleges and universities provides a vivid reminder that we live in a linguistic world whose complexity and ambiguities no longer match the neat categorizations of writers in place at most institutions. The question of who is and is not a native speaker of English, for example, is a vexed one. (p. 155)

In light of these realities of contemporary composition classrooms, Matsuda (2003) points out that it is important that instructors be ready to work with and give feedback to a mixed population of students. However, little work has analyzed and compared L1 and L2 composition research on instructor feedback. Such a comparison could illuminate what the bodies of scholarship suggest regarding practices that are helpful for both L1 and L2 student populations, and where the different populations can benefit from different feedback practices. For this thesis, I intend to do a critical analysis of L1 and L2 composition scholarship on instructor feedback to make recommendations for instructors based on this analysis.

Generation 1.5 Students and Diversity
in Composition Classrooms

One of those groups, within a mixed population of today's college classrooms, include Generation 1.5 students. Reid (1998) helps us to conceptualize differences between Generation 1.5 and international students in terms of "ear" learners and "eye" learners. Ear learners such as U.S. resident ESL writers, usually have learned English through listening, rather than through extensive reading and writing. Within this group, Reid discusses refugee students whose parents have left their country due to political reasons or have sent their children to U.S. to live with family members. She suggests that these students are typically orally fluent in their first language. However, due to interrupted schooling or limited schooling, these students are probably not fully literate in their first language. These students, by the way of immersion in the language and culture, have learned English. In this way, Reid suggests, they have acquired English through their "ears." She states that:

> . . . they listened, took in oral language (from
>
> teachers, TV, grocery clerks, friends, peers), and
>
> subconsciously began to form vocabulary, grammar, and

syntax rules, learning English principally through oral trial and error. (p. 4)

International student writers, on the other hand, are considered "eye" learners. According to Reid (1998) these are usually students who choose to attend postsecondary schools in the United States after having done all of their elementary and secondary school education in their countries. Many of these students, according to Reid, hold visas and come from privileged and well- educated families. These students are:

. . . literate and fluent in their first language and they have learned English in foreign language classes. They have learned English in foreign language classes and have learned English principally through their eyes, studying vocabulary, verb forms, and language rules. (p. 6)

Singhal (2004) divides Generation 1.5 into six groups (Non-traditional ESL learners, Ear Learners, Limited knowledge of home language, Growing knowledge of English, Good oral/aural skills, and Inexperienced readers and writers). He also gives us a description of the "Limited knowledge of home language" learners. Much like the "ear" learners Reid discusses, these students are usually

4

"academically illiterate in their home language" (Singhal, 2004, p. 2). Singhal also describes a population he calls "Growing knowledge of English" students, those who although "their knowledge of English continues to improve in college, tend to lag behind native speakers in reading and writing" (p. 2). Similarly, Singhal (2004) states that "Good oral/aural skills learners" are those that sound native. These students can explain ideas "clearly through oral communication" (p. 2). However, they appear to lack "non-salient grammatical structures" (p. 2). His category of "Inexperienced readers and writers" are students who have read "novels and fiction in high school and not familiar with a variety of academic texts" (p. 2).

As Singhal's categories suggest, one aspect of Generation 1.5 students is that they all bring different experiences to the classroom. There is not a "one size fits all" model of who they are in terms of their background knowledge. Harklau, Losey, and Siegal (1999) mention that there could be a variety of educational experiences among Generation 1.5 students. Some of these students, for example, could have attended U. S. school, thus being somewhat knowledgeable of the culture of U.S. schools and American society. However, the authors also point out that

some Generation 1.5 students may be new to the United States, but have "extensive academic literacy training in their home country" (p. 4). These students seem to have an easier transition in acquiring English academic discourse in the U.S.

Singhal (2004) points out that although Generation 1.5 have:

> . . . familiarity with the culture and the schooling experiences here, they do have very different needs from other English language learners, such as immigrants with limited English proficiency and international students who come abroad to obtain a degree. (p. 2)

He points out that one difference between ESL students and Generation 1.5 students is that Generation 1.5 students are "often not familiar with names of grammatical terms such as parts of speech while ESL students are because of their experience in ESL courses and with grammar texts" (p. 3).

It is important for L1 and L2 college composition instructors to understand these and other characteristics of Generation 1.5 students, because researchers have noted the increasing presence of Generation 1.5 students in U.S. higher education. Wurr (2004), for example, states:

Public schools today are witnessing an equally
startling increase in the number of learners from
diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds as a
result of changes in higher education funding,
immigration laws, and political strife worldwide.
(p. 14)

Wurr (2004) also points out that:

U.S.-educated ESL learners'living in multilingual
households and communities now make up a significant
portion of students with ESL writing traits, even
though many consider themselves native English
speakers and writers. (p. 15)

Harklau, Losey, and Siegal (1999) have asked important
questions regarding these types of diverse students and the
ethical dilemmas regarding college writing requirements.
For example, they ask questions such as "can or should
students from bilingual backgrounds be held to the same
writing standards as monolingual speakers of standard
English, and if not, how do we establish different but
equivalent and appropriate standards?" (p. 1). They also
consider "what forms of writing instruction are appropriate
for bilingual students" (p. 1).

Challenges in Categorizing L1 and L2 Students

Within this context, we can consider what research shows in regards to the difficulties of categorizing the mixed populations of L1 and L2 students. Research shows that categorizing such populations, including Generation 1.5 students, has not been an easy task for many institutions. Each group has particular needs, thus requiring differentiated instruction. Matsuda (2006) states that institutions put L2 students into basic writing classes without fully understanding the writing issues and language issues relevant to those students. Harklau, Losey, and Siegal (1999) mention that the most common practice by colleges and universities is to place "English learners in an ESL presequence of courses for first-year composition" (pp. 6-7). However, they also call attention to the fact that research differs on how to best categorize linguistically diverse college writers.

Harklau, Losey, and Siegal (1999) believe that these are complicated dilemmas because of the ways non-native speakers and writers of English tend to be categorized in existing literature and institutional practices; these categories may not take into consideration the backgrounds, experiences, and needs of linguistically diverse students

8

in colleges today. They also state that most students on college campuses who speak a language other than English at home are classified first and foremost as ESL students writers; however, Generation 1.5 students may not see themselves as ESL students.

This general categorization of all L2 students as ESL may hinder the efficacy of instruction by institutions since the individual needs of a mixed population may not be addressed. For example, Nayar (1997) states that the "generalized used of ESL can mask the fact that different population, needs, and goals are intended depending on the context" (cited in Harklau, Losey, and Siegal, 1999, p. 2). This generalized approach may not best serve students who do not fit the categories assigned by institutions unaware of the backgrounds of each student. Matsuda (2006) states that:

> One of the persisting elements of the dominant image of students in English studies is the assumption that students are by default native speakers of a privileged variety of English from the United States. Although the image of students as native speakers of privileged varieties of English is seldom articulated or defended—an indication that English-only is already

taken for granted—it does surface from time to time in the work of those who are otherwise knowledgeable about issues of language and difference. (p. 639)

Issues in Teaching Diverse Student Populations

Harklau, Losey, and Siegal (1999) state that if universities would make an effort to reform their policies, then "nonnative language writers" would definitely benefit. They believe, however, many colleges do not appear to make this effort and thus are "pursuing a policy of not-so-benign neglect of language learners on campus" (p. 6).

Wurr (2004) states the following in regards to some solutions on how to best fit the needs of second-language writers:

> While seconding Matsuda's call for 'specialists in both fields to transform their institutional practices in ways that reflect the needs and characteristics of second-language writers in their own institutions,' I believe a more comprehensive, integrated, and unified approach to composition instruction and professional training is necessary. (p. 19)

Wurr (2004) states that intertwining "L1 and L2 composition theory and practice more consistently in English studies

would better prepare professionals in the field for today's linguistically diverse classrooms and communities" (p. 19).

Currently, there is a greater need for this intertwining so that composition instructors are better prepared to work with the variety of L1, L2, and Generation 1.5 students often found together in the same classroom. Matsuda (2006) indicates that it is not unusual for instructors, perplexed by the existence of language differences in the classroom, to tell students merely to "proofread more carefully" or to "go to the writing center" (p. 642). As Matsuda's statement suggests, one area in which composition instructors could use some guidance is in how to respond to the writing of linguistically diverse students. The section below outlines how this thesis addresses this area through a synthesis of L1 and L2 research on teacher feedback.

Overview of the Thesis

I will focus specifically on what the scholarship indicates about students' attitudes toward instructor feedback and strategies of instructor feedback. I hope that this analysis will help instructors become aware of similarities and differences between the two bodies of

scholarship and how they inform the teaching of mixed populations of writers, including Generation 1.5. The first chapter of my thesis has aimed to establish the need to compare previous research in L1 and L2 composition on instructor feedback. Chapter Two will focus on L1 and L2 research in relation to students' attitudes to feedback. Chapter Three will focus on scholarship related to strategies of instructor feedback. Chapter Four will consider practical implications of these findings for composition classrooms.

CHAPTER TWO

L1 AND L2 RESEARCH IN RELATION TO STUDENTS'

ATTITUDES TO FEEDBACK

This chapter will consider scholarship on the

attitudes of both L1 and L2 students in relationship to

students' attitudes to feedback. The research can help

instructors to understand potential similarities and

differences in attitudes toward feedback between these

types of students.

L1 Research on Students' Attitudes to Feedback

L1 research suggests that L1 students do not seem to

appreciate feedback as much as L2 and Generation 1.5

students. Although there are not many specific cases that

show that L1 students resent feedback, L1 literature does

not appear, overall, to show L1 students' appreciation for

critical feedback in writing by instructors. However,

praise seems to be well received by L1 students in terms of

feedback.

A study by Leki (1990, cited in Ferris, 1995) shows

that L1 students reported feeling hostility toward

teachers' attempts to take over their ideas and writing

through their feedback. Sullivan (1986) also points out
that L1 students, when given too much criticism of their
writing, tend to see it as a criticism of themselves and
their values. Gee (2006) in his essay "Students' Responses
to Teacher Comments" points out that "the students'
reaction are sometimes quite different from those that the
teacher had expected or hoped for" (p. 38). Gee gives us an
example of students' reactions to feedback:

> Writing awkward in the margin of the student's
> composition may provoke more than a student's careful
> revision for clarity and sophistication. Students
> often interpret a marginal notation like *clumsy,*
> *poorly written,* or *illogical* as personal indictment or
> as almost total disparagement of their skills. (p. 38)

Gee (2006) continues by saying that a student, by contrast,
who receives no marks may assume that their paper was
unworthy to be read. He makes it clear that whatever the
comments are, it will "influence the attitudes the student
has about a particular composition, and the instructor's
comments will likely contribute one way or another to the
expectation the student has about becoming an adequate
writer" (p. 39).

Although, for the most part, L1 literature suggests that L1 students may resist feedback on their writing, there are some studies that show the opposite. Gee (2006) gives some examples suggesting that students respond well to praise, more than to no comments or to negative feedback. Gee, "conducted an investigation of the effects of praise, negative comment, and no comment on expository composition" (p. 39) students. In the study, "praised students had more positive attitudes toward writing than students who were criticized or students who received no comment" (p. 43). Gee gives further insights on the issue and suggests that the "study indicates that to assist the building of positive attitudes, teachers must give a pat-on-the-back for the improvements that the student makes" (p. 44). Gee says that to "withhold praise until the student has achieved an ideal performance is educationally unsound" (p. 44). He concludes by saying that students' "continued improvement" comes from acknowledgment of "what they do well in addition to what they do not do so well" (p. 44). Gee suggests that the students' "confidence and pride in their efforts, and their enjoyment of writing, are enhanced by a teacher's assurance that they are beginning to master the skills required for good writing" (p. 44).

L2 Attitudes toward Feedback

L2 research indicates, for the most part, that L2 students appreciate instructors' feedback. Hyland and Hyland (2006) report that "surveys of students' feedback preferences indicate that ESL students greatly value teachers' written feedback and consistently rate it more highly than alternative forms, such as peer feedback and oral feedback in writing conferences" (p. 3). Similarly, Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) suggest that "one important and clear finding is that L2 student writers are very likely to incorporate teacher commentary into their subsequent revisions" (p. 187). Hyland and Hyland (2006) suggest more specifically that L2 students value remarks that are encouraging. However, they also suggest that L2 students want to receive constructive criticism rather than simple "generic" remarks. These students do not want the "rubber stamp" comments, which may lack original feedback depending on the need of the student.

Similarly, Ferris (2003) points to some studies indicating that L2 student writers feel that teacher feedback on their errors is extremely important to their progress. According to Ferris and Roberts (2001), studies show that L2 student writers want, expect, and value

16

teacher feedback on their written errors. They also point
to several studies that show that students "prefer indirect
feedback with error codes or labels attached over either
direct teacher correction or errors being simply marked but
not labeled" (p. 166). However, Ferris and Roberts (2001)
also suggest the exception of these studies. They mention a
study by Ferris et al. (2000) that suggests "expressed
student preferences have not been connected explicitly to
patterns seen in student texts" (p. 166).

Why do L2 students sometimes seem to take feedback
more positively than some L1 students? Hyland and Hyland
(2006) suggest that ESL students do not look at feedback as
a personal attack on their self worth. Hyland and Hyland
note "the idea that 'error' has different connotations for
L2 learners is one that needs further investigation"
(p. 4). Thus, we cannot be conclusive as to why ESL
students do not look at feedback as a personal attack on
their worth. By contrast, they suggest that L1 writers may
see a correlation between their self worth and feedback.
Overall then, L2 students seem to accept feedback as part
of the process of learning how to write. And the research
suggests that L2 students seem to appreciate feedback at
both the sentence-level and global level. However, Ferris

(2002) in her book *Treatment of Error in Second Language Student Writing*, points out that although it has been assumed in the literature that L2 student writers expect and value error feedback from instructors, too much attention to student errors may offend and demotivate student writers.

Attitudes toward Feedback: Generation 1.5

In light of this research, we also need to consider Generation 1.5 in relationship to their feelings toward teachers' feedback on their writing. We may wonder whether these students are more like L1 or L2 students in their response to feedback. In fact, the scholarship suggests that in terms of feedback, Generation 1.5 students are similar to L2 students. Ferris (1999) suggests that Generation 1.5 students "value feedback on both content and grammar issues" (p. 147). She suggests that a number of researchers looked at student reactions toward teacher feedback. The students were Generation 1.5 students who had been in the country for quite some time. Students in these studies found feedback very helpful. Ferris in her chapter "One Size Does Not Fit All: Response and Revision Issues for Immigrant Student Writers" states that "recently,

several researchers" examined Generation 1.5 students'
reactions to teacher feedback (p. 147) (Ferris, 1999,
Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; McCurdy, 1992). In these
studies, these students "consider teacher feedback very
seriously and find it extremely helpful in revising their
work and in later writing projects" (p. 147). In summary,
all of these studies show that:

> . . . teacher feedback (whether oral or written) can
> have significant, positive effects on student revision
> when the feedback is thoughtful and focuses primarily
> on student ideas, when students are motivated to
> revise, and when they respect their teachers' efforts
> on their behalf. (p. 149)

This chapter has shown differences among L1, L2, and
Generation 1.5 students. One of those differences is the
attitudes towards feedback. L1 students, for the most part,
may resist feedback on their writing. However, there is
some L1 research that suggests the opposite. L2 research
indicates that L2 students appreciate, expect, and apply
the feedback given to them by their teachers. Generation
1.5 students also appreciate and expect feedback from their
instructors. Overall, studies show that teacher feedback
affects student revisions in a positive way. The following

chapter deals with the type of feedback usually given to L1, L2, and Generation 1.5 students. For the most part, L2 research suggests that instructors should be students' "facilitators," and "coaches," using different strategies to dialogue with the students. L1 research also warns instructors to be careful not to use their "Ideal Text" when grading papers. "Ideal Text" refers to the idea that instructors should not try to direct the message of the student, hindering what the student is really trying to say. L1 research also promotes the idea that instructors should not use "rubber stamp" comments. These are comments that are generic and general without considering the purpose or the context of the text. The chapter also gives research-based strategies used by L1 instructors. Some strategies in this chapter include the idea that instructors should model, dialogue, and guide students in the process of writing while encouraging them. This chapter also discusses L2 research on instructors' strategies for error feedback, criteria to consider when making decisions on error correction, the effect of direct and indirect feedback, and suggestions for Generation 1.5 student writers.

CHAPTER THREE

STRATEGIES OF INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK

Although research shows that there are different

approaches to teaching L1 and L2 writing, Ferris and

Hedgcock (2005) emphasize that "one element has remained

constant: Both teachers and students feel that teacher

feedback on student writing is a critical, nonnegotiable

aspect of writing instruction" (p. 185). Thus, most L1 and

L2 instructors appear to agree for the most part that

teacher feedback is important for the development of

writing. However, their strategies for offering this

feedback may differ.

L1 Feedback on Global Concerns

For the most part, L1 research related to feedback

foregrounds a particular overarching approach to giving

feedback on global content and organization in student

writing. For the most part, research in L1 suggests that

the instructor should be the students' "facilitator," and

"coach" (Straub, 1996; Moxley, 1989; Sommers, 1982;

Sommers, 1992; Ziv, 1984). As coaches, good teachers are

seen as in dialogue with students about their writing. In

this same vein, L1 research related to feedback also presents as negative the concept of this "Ideal Text" relating to teachers directing the student to what they think is perfect writing in response to the assignment. Thus, L1 research appears to warn instructors to be aware of their own biases in relationship to how the students' writing should look. For example, Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) in the article "On Students' Rights to Their Own Texts: A Model of Teacher Response" propose that we try not to intervene with the writing of the students in a way that affects the message. The authors suggest that when instructors come in with their "Ideal Text," the consequence of this could be that we change the whole meaning of what the student is really trying to say. They argue that "denying students control of what they want to say must surely reduce incentive and also, presumably, the likelihood of improvement" (p. 159). The article also emphasizes that if we read our students' papers with our own "lenses" of the Ideal Text, we are opposing the authority and experiences of the students to a certain extent. Sommers (1982) also suggests that "teachers' comments can take students' attention away from their own purposes in writing a particular text and focus that

attention on the teachers' purpose in commenting" (p. 149).
Related to this idea, Sommers believes that students will
make the changes that the instructor want-- instead of the
ones the students think are necessary.

Within this context, L1 research also appears to
promote the idea of developing effective comments – by
asking questions that are not "rubber stamped." These are
questions that encourage dialogue, critical thinking,
cohesiveness, organization, and voice – considering the
contextual purpose of the text at hand. Framing the teacher
as someone who helps students to discover how to
communicate meaning therefore appears to be the current
overarching paradigm in L1 research related to feedback. In
light of this view, it is perhaps not surprising that L1
research in terms of feedback appears hesitant in relation
to giving sentence-level feedback. Hartman and Tarone
(1999), for example, point out that "mainstream English
instructors reported that they look more for organization,
clarity of thought, and critical thinking skills than
grammar" (p. 108). In that same vein, Straub and Lunsford
(1995), in their book, *Twelve Readers Reading: Responding
to College Student Writing*, encourage composition
instructors to make comments only on the global meaning of

students' early drafts. Although the book does not directly state that instructors should not respond to students' grammar, it implies that it is less emphasized.

L1 research, at one time, used to focus more on grammar feedback. However, this emphasis has dissipated – for the most part. Connors and Lunsford (1993) suggest that:

> . . . since the 1950s the field of composition studies has waxed, and its attitude toward teacher response to student writing has remained marked by the essential assumption that the teacher must and should engage the student in rhetorical dialogue. (p. 204)

Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) point out that:

> L1 researchers have consistently challenged the practice of teaching grammar and punctuation rules in composition courses. The basic argument is that student writers already have an intuitive sense of the rules of their language. (p. 272)

L1 Instructors' Strategies

These approaches to feedback discussed in L1 research seem to suggest that instructors should use strategies that help students develop into skilled thinkers leading them to

become skilled writers, with the assumption that grammar and syntactic corrections are not as important.

One of the L1 strategies suggested by Lou LaBrant (2006) is to have instructors read the students' paper before commenting on it. She states that although this sounds simple, it involves giving thought to what is being said in the paper. She points out that one should read the paper at least once before marking the paper, unless you can make check marks as you look for ideas. Reading the paper should lead you to understand "what prompted the paper, what limited it, what its strengths and weaknesses are, what it really says. After this reading the teacher is ready for comment" (p. 204).

Almost immediately, Labrant emphasizes that instructors, particularly during the early part of the term, should encourage students about the ideas they are communicating in their papers. She states that one should "put effort to encourage and suggest further communication" (p. 204). This does not mean that instructors should be superficial when they give feedback. She points out that "the most important stimulus is to comment directly on the experiences put forth, even though these may be relatively unimportant and feeble" (p. 203). She emphasizes that any

of the comments should imply respect for what the student has written. In addition, she explains that we need to show appreciation for good writing. For example, excellent papers should not simply be described with an adjective (i.e. good, excellent, wonderful, etc.). Similarly, Dusel (2006) suggests that these adjectives should be followed by the appropriate substantives. Dusel (2006) also suggests that writing words like "'yes' occasionally in the margin is an excellent way of letting the writer know that the reader is nodding his head in agreement or understanding" (p. 217). To add variety teachers could use "I agree," or "true" or "You're so right" (Dusel, 2006).

Another type of feedback strategy mentioned in the L1 research is to have a dialogue with the student as you give comments. For example, Straub (1996) in his article "Teacher Response as Conversation: More Than Casual Talk, an Exploration" encourages teachers to see " comments as a dialogue between teacher and student, an ongoing discussion between the teacher reader and the student writer, a conversation" (p. 374). A similar suggestion by Lindemann (1987) is that teachers ought to make comments that "create a kind of dialogue" between teacher and student and "keep the lines of communication open" (cited in Straub, p. 374).

Straub asks: "What makes a response "conversational?"
(p. 375). Based on his observations of five teachers
commenting on the same essay, he offers three suggestions.
First, responses should be written in an informal voice
instead of in teacher talk; second, they should ground
themselves in the student text to "come to terms" with what
the student is saying; and third, they should "play back"
the reader's way of understanding the text (Straub, 1996).

Straub also cites Anson (1989), who encourages
instructors "to write comments that are more casual than
formal, as if rhetorically sitting next to the writer,
collaborating, suggesting, guiding, modeling" (cited in
Straub, p. 374). Along this same train of thought, Ziv
(1984) states that comments "can only be helpful if
teachers respond to student writing as part of an ongoing
dialogue between themselves and their students" (cited in
Straub, p. 374). Related to the instructor-as-facilitator,
Straub suggests that comments that are constructed in a way
that creates real dialogue help students have "greater
control over their own writing choices" (p. 374).
Similarly, Danis (1987) believes that seeing comments as a
conversation, encourages instructors, including herself, to
see themselves as "a collaborator, a midwife, a coach-than

27

a ruthless judge" (cited in Straub, p. 374). Then she

states the following:

> So I'm faced with the challenge of responding in such
>
> a way that students will hear in my comments the kind
>
> of voice that I'm trying to project. This metaphor of
>
> response as conversation has come about as a
>
> corrective to the traditional use of comments simply
>
> to label errors and mark problems. (p. 374)

Another strategy concept in L1 research related to

feedback is the idea that comments should not be an end in

themselves. Rather, they should be perceived as helping

students in the process of becoming better writers.

Commenting, according to Sommers (1982), is a process of

helping students to achieve the purpose of the paper. The

objective of commenting, therefore, is not simply to give

students generic comments without really looking at

commenting as a way to help students with individual needs,

circumstances, and problems in relationship to writing. In

relation to giving less generic, more individually helpful

comments, Fife and O'Neill (2001) explain how instructors

can understand the context where they are giving feedback.

They state that "texts are understood in context and more

and more teachers recognize the importance of the whole

classroom context as a framework for response and move

toward including student voices in discussions about

writing" (p. 302). They propose that these practices are

important to take into account when looking at responses to

student writing because they "add many layers of complexity

and interaction to the traditional response dynamic of

students writing and teachers evaluating isolated essays"

(p. 302). However, they propose that empirical research

about response for the most part does not reflect this

"more complex configuring of response in recent classroom

practice" (p. 302).

L2 Research on Instructors' Strategies for Error Feedback

Ferris (2006) suggests that "attitudes and approaches

toward student error have been a source of debate among

second language acquisition (SLA) and second language (L2)

writing scholars for more than two decades" (p. 81).

Although there is disagreement by some researchers on error

correction, Ferris in her chapter notes that there are two

components that most researchers agree on:

1) that accuracy in writing matters to academic and

professional audiences and that obvious L2 error may

stigmatize writers in some contexts…and 2) that L2

student writers themselves claim to need and value

error feedback from their instructors. (p. 81)

However, Truscott (1999), who is skeptical about the

effectiveness of error feedback, believes that the

reinforcement that instructors give plays a role as to how

students view corrections. He believes that "by using

correction, teacher encourages students to believe in it;

because students believe in it, teacher must continue using

it" (p.116). He argues that in order for students to

continue believing in it, instructors must continue with

this "process."

There appears to be an active discussion in regards to

how and when to give feedback on written errors to L2

students. Hyland and Hyland (2006) suggest that due to the

fact that grammar errors are the most evident by L2

students, teachers feel the need to give feedback in this

area. However, how best to offer this feedback is an open

question in the field. Hartman and Tarone (1999) point out

that "ESL teachers saw themselves primarily as grammar

teachers and that their focus in the teaching of writing

was on grammar and structure" (p. 111). Hyland and Hyland

(2006) state that:

. . . while process approaches emphasize the need for writing uninhibited by language correction, grammar errors can be an obvious problem for L2 writers, and it is not surprising that teacher often feel the need to respond to the them.

(p. 3)

Ferris and Roberts (2001) state that educators and researchers continue to discuss when to give L2 students feedback on written errors to L2 students. They also point out that there is little existing evidence as to how written error feedback should be given. Within this context, it is important to emphasize that instructors want to find the best ways in order to help student writing. However, Reid (1994), for example, suggests that many ESL instructors are afraid that their "responses to students' academic prose may appropriate student texts and thereby disempowering their students" (p. 273). In turn, they might not feel comfortable as to how much error feedback to give. The article suggests, that due to this fear, many instructors like the "hands off" approach.

Researchers have also discussed whether written error feedback to L2 students is even effective. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) state that qualitative description on

teacher commentary brings about a pressing question of whether it actually helps writing development. They point out that "studies on the nature of teacher feedback and its effects on student writers have been rare" (p. 188). And there are different views by students and instructors as to what is actually helpful and not. Truscott (1999) believes that "grammar correction is a bad idea" (p. 111). However, Ferris (1999) objects to Truscott's argument in regards to grammar correction. Truscott (1996) suggests that grammar correction is not effective. Furthermore, he argues that research does not show that correction in L2 writing really makes a difference in the quality of students' writing. Truscott (1996) states that "teachers and researchers hold a widespread, deeply entrenched belief that grammar correction should, even must, be part of writing courses" (p. 327). However, he questions the "base of this belief" (p. 327). He almost immediately argues that "the literature contains few serious attempts to justify the practice on empirical grounds; those that exist pay scant attention to the substantial research that has found correction ineffective or harmful" (p. 328).

He continues with his argument by stating that "most writing on the subject simply takes the value of grammar

32

correction for granted. Thus, authors often assume the practice is effective, without offering any argument or citing any evidence" (p. 328). Then he states that when "someone cites evidence, it generally consists of only one or two token sources, with no critical assessment on them" (p. 328).

The other argument against grammar is Truscott's belief that "researchers have similarly failed to look critically at the nature of the correction process" (p. 328). He then states that research on "the subject rarely considers the many practical problems involved in grammar correction and largely ignores a number of theoretical issues which, if taken seriously, would cast doubt on its effectiveness" (p. 328). Finally, he states that "researchers have paid insufficient attention to the side effects of grammar correction, such as its effect on students' attitudes, or the way it absorbs time and energy in writing classes" (p. 328). His argument continues by him stating that researchers "assume that grammar correction must be used in writing classes, regardless of the problems it creates; this assumption is very rarely discussed seriously" (p. 328). His thesis is basically that "grammar correction has no place in writing courses and should be

abandoned" (p. 328). Then he gives his reasons why "grammar correction has no place in writing courses" and why it "should be abandoned":

> The reasons are: (a) Research evidence shows that grammar correction is ineffective; (b) this lack of effectiveness is exactly what should be expected, given the nature of the correction process and the nature of language learning; (c) grammar correction has significant harmful effects; and (d) the various arguments offered for continuing it all lack merit. (Truscott, 1996, p. 328)

However, Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) in the book *Teaching ESL Composition; Purpose, Process, and Practice* suggest that "empirical evidence strongly suggests that error feedback can help students, both in the short and long term" (p. 264). They immediately state that the findings in second language literature "show that adult acquirers in particular need their errors made salient and explicit to them so they can avoid fossilization and continue developing their target language competence" (p. 264).

In one of the most recent articles, Ferris (2004) responds to Truscott's (1999) most current response of Ferris' (1999) rebuttal on grammar correction. Ferris

(2004) notes that "Truscott claimed that the error

correction research in L2 writing was conclusive in

demonstrating that grammar correction was ineffective in

facilitating improvement in student writing" (p. 50).

However, Ferris argues "that the research base was far from

complete and conclusive on that question" (p. 50).

Furthermore, Ferris (2004) also states that "Truscott had

made the observation in his 1996 article that although

students clearly want grammar correction, that does not

mean teachers should give it to them" (p. 50). She goes on

to say that she "offered the opinion in response that L2

writing students' strongly stated desires for error

feedback could not so easily be dismissed or ignored"

(p. 50). Ferris (2004) offers a response to Truscott's

(1999) response:

> Truscott's response to my rebuttal essentially
>
> reiterated his previous conclusions. I would say that
>
> the only two points on which he and I agreed are (a)
>
> that the research base on error correction in L2
>
> writing is indeed insufficient and (b) that the
>
> 'burden of proof' is on those who would argue in favor
>
> of error correction (see also Polio, Fleck, & Leder,
>
> 1998). At that point, since we both agreed that more

research was necessary, I decided to stop debating and
go and do some more research! (Ferris, 2004, p. 50)

Criteria to Consider When Making
Decisions on Error Correction

According to Ferris (2002), in order for instructors
to mark papers wisely and selectively, they need to
consider several factors in deciding on strategies for
responding to L2 students' sentence level errors: language
learning experiences, English language proficiency, the
globalness or localness of errors, and stage of the writing
process.

One of the variables to attend to is the amount and
the type of English experiences that students have had.
Therefore, Ferris believes that we should understand the
background of the students' English language learning
processes. Drawing on Reid (1994), she makes a comparison
between international students and permanent U.S.
residents. She states that international students are "eye"
learners. This means that these types of students have had
a formal exposure to grammar and key grammatical terms.
However, the permanent U.S. residents (e.g., Generation 1.5
students) who are "ear" learners, have been exposed to

English informally and orally. Ferris (2002) points out that these students "might have little or no formal knowledge of grammatical terms or rules" (p. 54). Therefore, before L2 writing instructors use an error-correction system, Ferris (2002) points out that they need to take their time to know what students actually know and do not know about formal grammar.

Ferris (2002) also suggests that when deciding on error feedback strategies L2 writing instructors need to be sensitive to differences in students' English proficiency. L2 writing students have different levels of proficiency, which will "affect the number and type of errors that they make as well as their ability to process particular types of feedback" (p. 56). She states that advanced international students might just need cryptic codes to get them to correct errors efficiently. But U.S. resident students and even L1 students might not be able to handle cryptic codes since they might not be familiarized with them. Regarding proficiency, Ferris (2002) directs our attention to Brown (1994) who gives us "a taxonomy of the stages of error recognition and ability to correct through which learners may pass" (cited in Ferris, p. 56). Brown mentions 3 stages (random emergent, presystematic,

systematic, and stabilization). He suggests that students
in the random and emergent stages are totally or somewhat
unsystematic in their uses of particular structures.
Students that are at the presystematic stages, usually
cannot self-correct even if the error is pointed out.
Systematic and stabilization stages are the most proficient
levels. At these stages, the errors of students are more
systematic, showing patterns that show what they know and
do not know. At this stage students can correct errors on
their own or with the help of an instructor.

Ferris (2002) also states that instructors may want to
prioritize feedback on global errors over local errors.
Global errors are those errors that affect the message of
the paper. Local errors, however, do not affect
comprehension. Sometimes, we have to look at the context of
the error in order to determine if it is local or global.
Ferris (2002) states the following in regards to
global/local distinction: "While the global/local
distinction is intuitively appealing to teachers, it should
be noted that the relative "globalness" of an error varies
substantially according to the surrounding context of the
error" (p. 58). However, she mentions that "it would be an
overstatement to say that all lexical errors are global and

38

all verb tense error are local (Ferris, 2002, p. 58). She gives an example to explain these differences:

> c) San Francisco is a very *beauty* city. d) I *study* English for four hours every day. Example c) is a lexical error (word form), as a noun was used when the adjective form was required. Nonetheless, few readers would be confused about its meaning. The tense of the verb *study* in example (d) could be either correct or incorrect depending on the intended time frame of the statement, which might not be obvious from the surrounding context. (Ferris, 2002, p. 58)

The intended time frame, therefore, when looking at a verb in a sentence, could confuse the meaning of the sentence which may not be "obvious from the surrounding context" (p. 58). Therefore, Ferris (2002) states that the "meaning (as to time frame) could be obscured if this is indeed a verb tense error, creating a global error that interferes with reader comprehension" (p. 58).

Ferris points out that another way to prioritize would be targeting grammar issues related to a grammar issue that the class has been discussing. For example, if the instructor is teaching subject-verb agreement in one lesson, she can focus on those errors as she corrects their

writing assignments in the classroom. The instructor might

also give writing assignments as homework – letting

students know that she specifically wants them to make sure

that they will use subject verb agreement correctly.

Students should be accountable for knowing how to use

subject verb agreement correctly.

There is also a fine line as to when and how much

feedback to give. She points out that "if teachers give too

much error feedback early in the composing process (while

students are still deciding what they want to say),

students' further writing and revision become merely an

exercise in proofreading rather than substantive

thought"(Ferris, 2002, p. 61). Knowing when to give

feedback, will determine how effective it will be in

relationship to students' revisions.

Direct and Indirect Error Feedback Strategies

In addition to considering different criteria for what

sorts of errors are useful to attend to with what levels of

students, L2 research has also examined types of error

feedback that may be effective. Ferris and Roberts (2001)

and Ferris (2002) discuss the distinction that has been

made in the literature between direct and indirect teacher

feedback. Direct feedback is given when the instructor directly corrects the error for the student. The student only needs to incorporate the correction. Indirect feedback, however, happens when the instructor indicates that an error exists but does not provide the correction. Therefore, the teacher lets the student know that there is a problem, but it is up to the student to solve it. Ferris (2002) describes different forms of indirect feedback. Indirect feedback can be done by indicating an error "through circling, underlining, highlighting, or otherwise marking it at its location in a sentence, with or without a verbal rule reminder or an error code, and asking students to make corrections themselves" (p. 63). Indirect feedback has generally been viewed as more effective. Ferris and Roberts (2001) point out that "Error correction researchers who have examined the effects of these two contrasting types of feedback have reported that indirect feedback helps students to make progress in accuracy over time more than direct feedback does" (p. 164). They also suggest that indirect feedback gives a chance for the student to be more reflective and analytical in regards to their errors.

However, depending on the learner and/or the error, either direct or indirect feedback may be most appropriate.

Ferris suggests, for example, that the type of error feedback (indirect or direct) depends on whether the student is an ear leaner or eye learner (which is related to the amount of grammatical terminology they know), their stage of English language proficiency, and the type of error it is - treatable or non-treatable -, and the stage of writing draft process.

Direct feedback should be considered when students are at the "beginning levels of English language proficiency" (Ferris, 2002, p. 63). She explains this further by stating that teachers should consider Direct feedback when:

> Students are at beginning levels of English language proficiency; 2) when errors are "nontreatable"; and 3) when the teacher wishes to focus student attention on particular error patterns but not others. (Ferris, 2002, p. 63)

Ferris (2002) explains further by stating that "students who are in the early stages of learning English may not have either the formal linguistic knowledge or the acquired competence to self-correct errors" (p. 63).

Furthermore, Ferris suggest that direct feedback should be used for "nontreatable" errors. "Untreatable" errors, according to Ferris (2002), are those errors "that

there is no rule to which students can turn to correct an error when it is pointed out to them" (p. 64). Ferris explains the most common "nontreatable" errors:

> The most common errors of this type are errors in word choice and word form and awkward or unidiomatic sentence structure. In such cases, it may be more helpful for the teacher to suggest a different word or a restatement of the sentence than to simply underline the word or sentence and mark "wc" (word choice) or "ss" (sentence structure). (Ferris, 2002, p. 64)

It appears that if the teacher simply underlines the word or sentence with a mark, on a "nontreatable" error, the student might become confused and thus not be able to fix it.

Effects of Direct and Indirect Feedback

Having set the stage by suggesting that there is little evidence as to how explicit error feedback should be in order to help students, Ferris and Roberts (2001), in one study on this issue, ask the following question:

> When teachers mark student errors, do they need to indicate the type of error (wrong verb tense, omitted obligatory article, run-on, etc.) the student has

made, or is it adequate for the teacher to simply underline or circle an erroneous form, leaving it to the student to diagnose and correct the problem? (p. 162)

They believe that this is an important question since coding the type of error could be time consuming for teachers – instead of just underlining an error on the paper. They also suggest that the instructor might not label the error correctly. They suggest that "there is a much greater chance that the teacher will mislabel an error if s/he is identifying it by type rather than simply locating it for the student" (162).

Ferris and Roberts (2001) raise the following question: "How explicit should indirect feedback be in order to give students enough direction to self-correct their error?" (p. 164). Considering exceptions for students at lower levels of L2 proficiency and "idiosyncratic types of errors" (164), they observed that there is a range from explicit direct correction to merely putting a checkmark in the margins. The most explicit feedback includes "marking an error at its exact location in the text and labeling it with a code or verbal cue, such as 'VT,' 'wrong verb tense,' or 'use past tense'" (p. 164).

Within this study, Ferris and Roberts (2001) state that they "found substantial, highly significant differences in our subjects' editing outcomes between the two feedback groups and the no-feedback group" (p. 176). They state that "there were no significant differences in editing success between the group that received coded feedback and the group that simply had errors underlined" (p. 176). Furthermore, they also "looked at the effects of specific error types on students' ability to utilize feedback for editing" (p. 176). They state that their "subjects made the most errors in verbs, followed by sentence structure, word choice, noun endings, and articles" (p. 176). The subjects were "successful in editing errors in the 'treatable' category than the 'untreatable' types" (p. 176). Furthermore, they also state that "the non feedback control group was more successful in finding and correcting word choice errors than any other error category" (p. 176). They stated that their findings were similar to those of Ferris et al. (2000) and Robb et al. (1986) in that there did not seem to be an immediate advantage to more explicit (coded) indirect feedback for the student writers in this study" (p. 176).

Suggestions for Generation 1.5 Student Writers

Ferris (2002) introduces previous studies, which give suggestions when dealing with immigrant student writers in relation to teacher error feedback and student revisions. Ferris (2002) suggests that for students who are at the lower levels of proficiency, locating the error may not be sufficient.

Ferris states that there are still many questions which have not been answered in relationship to teacher feedback to immigrant student writers. She emphasizes the importance of studying and describing different groups of immigrant student writers. She believes that we need to compare and contrast them with international students and to identify various variables in immigrant students' background. By looking at their background characteristics (e.g., linguistic and cultural differences, educational experiences), we will able to have a better understanding of how these elements will affect their responses as well as the revision dynamics and the development of students as writers. Ferris (1999) also suggests practical strategies to help immigrant student writers. She suggests that higher order questions should be accompanied by concrete suggestions. Furthermore, she suggests that one should

discuss revisions strategies with the whole class. These revision strategies would include a marked student essay and talking about what types of changes the teacher comments suggest and how those suggestions could be applied in the paper.

This Chapter presents different concerns in L1 and L2 research. For the most part L1 instructors are concerned with global issues pertaining to content, organization, and ideas. L2 research seems to emphasize grammar, syntax, and sentence level errors. L1 instructors, in the research, are directed to be "facilitators" and "coaches" instead of "unfeeling judges." Anson (1989), for example, encourages instructors "to write comments that are more casual than formal, as if rhetorically sitting next to the writer, collaborating, suggesting, guiding, modeling" (cited in Straub, p. 374). In this same vein, L1 instructors are asked to be aware of the "Ideal Text." "Ideal Text" refers to the idea that instructors can be easily persuaded to use their own "lenses" when looking at students' papers. L1 research warns instructors about not guiding students' writing to the point where students are no longer using their own ideas in their papers but are rather being directed by the ideas of the instructor. L1 also seem to

promote the idea of developing effective comments—comments that are not "rubber stamp." L1 research suggests that instructors should engage in rhetorical dialogues with students. It appears that instructors, when they view themselves as "coaches" and "facilitators," they are able to guide students in a way that does not hinder the writing process. With genuine respect towards the students, collaboration, and guidance, instructors are able to facilitate the process of learning in terms of writing. When instructors become aware of their "Ideal Text," as they look at the students' writing, they will be able to have a closer look at the students' message before making any corrections which can affect the meaning of the text. L2 research suggests that L2 instructors should be aware of the various variables when considering how to best fit the needs of ESL students. These variables include how much, when, and what type of English instruction should be given to students based on their background such as formal or informal English acquisition and English proficiency. Knowing the stages in terms of proficiency, as stated by Brown (1994), will enable instructors to systematically know when, what type (i.e., Direct or Indirect Feedback), and how to integrate effective feedback. Chapter Four

summarizes the main points of the thesis, while giving

suggestions for instructors to best fit the needs of each

one of the groups presented in their classroom.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPLICATIONS

How can this survey of L1 and L2 scholarship on instructor feedback help an instructor who has a mixed population in the classroom? As I mentioned in Chapter One, Matsuda (2003) suggests that it is important that instructors be ready to work with and give feedback to a mixed population of students. This analysis of L1 and L2 composition research on instructor feedback has tried to ascertain what the bodies of scholarship suggest regarding practices that are helpful for L1 and L2 student populations, and where the different populations can benefit from different feedback practices. Neither L1 nor L2 research, in terms of feedback, really conflict with one another – for the most part. Rather, it appears as though both bodies of research complement one another. When teaching a mixed population of students, an instructor might find herself or himself drawing from both bodies of research to best fit the needs of each student. It is up to the instructor, therefore, to know what to choose in terms of what strategies to use when feedback is given.

In this thesis I looked at scholarship on the attitudes of both L1 and L2 students in relationship to students' attitudes to feedback. This research can be very valuable for instructors for understanding potential similarities and differences in attitudes toward feedback between these types of students. Overall, L1 students, throughout the L1 literature, seem possibly more resistant to feedback than L2 and Generation 1.5 students. However, it is important to notice that praise seems to be well received by L1 students in terms of feedback. For example, as mentioned by Gee (2006), "praised students had more positive attitudes toward writing than students who were criticized or students who received no comment" (p.43). In Chapter 2, it was mentioned that L2 research indicates, for the most part, that L2 students appreciate instructors' feedback. For example, Hyland and Hyland (2006) suggest that L2 students want to receive constructive criticism rather than simple "generic" remarks. These students do not want the "rubber stamp" comments which may lack original feedback depending on the needs of the student. Furthermore, Ferris and Roberts (2001) show that L2 student writers want, expect, and value teacher feedback on their written errors. Hyland and Hyland (2006) suggests that ESL

51

students do not look at feedback as a personal attack on their self worth. However, it was evident that L1 writers may see a correlation between their self worth and feedback. By having knowledge, based on research, on how, how much, and when to give praise to students, instructors may see better results in terms of students feeling more positive about writing and revision. Thus, students will become better writers.

Overall, Generation 1.5 scholarship suggests that these students are more similar to L2 students. How are they similar to L2 students? They value feedback as L2 students do. Ferris (1999) suggests that Generation 1.5 students "value feedback on both content and grammar issues"(p.147). I believe that this knowledge will help instructors in a mixed population classroom to better align their feedback – knowing how the views of feedback differ among L2, Generation 1.5, and L1 students.

Furthermore, the L2 literature suggests that individual differences should be considered, which might affect the effectiveness of error feedback. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) point out the following in regards to "individual differences and predispositions" (p. 189):

These issues include individual differences and predispositions (educational, cultural, and linguistic background; L2 writing proficiency levels; motivation for writing, types of writing being considered (e.g., genres and text types, journal entries, speed-writes) and classroom context (class size, teacher-student rapport, instructional style); and other types of feedback provided. (p. 189)

By having a complete understanding of these individual differences, instructors will not make judgments based only on their feelings about a "type" of student. Rather, the instructor will take into account the context in which the student is learning, while having an understanding of the many variables that could be evident in different types of students in a mixed population classroom. For example, a predisposition could include educational background. As Reid (1994) points out, those students who have had formal instruction in English ("eye" learners) will likely have more awareness of grammatical terminology and rules than U.S. resident "ear" learners. She makes a comparison between international students and permanent U.S. residents. How will this help an instructor teaching a classroom with a mixed population? Instructors may be able

53

to better direct their instruction by really knowing what students know and do not know—and how to best meet their needs by giving the best instruction possible. As Ferris (2002) notes, instructors need to take their time to know what students actually know and do not know about formal grammar before giving error feedback.

As mentioned earlier, for the most part, L1 research suggests that the instructors should be the students' "facilitator," and "coach" (Moxley, 1989; Sommers, 1982; Sommers, 1992; Straub, 1996; Ziv, 1984). This, however, should not make us think that L2 instructors are not "facilitators" and "coaches." This knowledge can help instructors to know - or remind them of this way of approaching students and their writing - while considering the various levels of English proficiency of students in the classroom and the implications of that. In this same vein, L1 research related to feedback also presents as negative the concept of this "Ideal Text" relating to teachers directing the student to what they think is perfect writing in response to the assignment. Thus, L1 research appears to warn instructors to be aware of their own biases in relationship to how the students' writing should look. If an instructor is not aware of this

misconception, this research can help the instructor to be aware that students have their own style of approaching a writing assignment. As mentioned earlier, constructing the teacher as someone who helps students to discover how to communicate meaning therefore appears to be the current overarching paradigm in L1 research related to feedback. This view of the teacher might help instructors to either remember or realize that part of teaching writing is to help students to discover how to communicate meaning, while being aware of the students' individual styles.

The L1 literature also presents the conversation of a teacher and student as a form of dialogue. Through dialogue instructors are able to engage, interact, and discuss ideas in an effective way keeping the communication open for further discussion. By having a good grasp of the literature related to dialogue in writing, instructors will able to know the best practices to help students think, write, and discover their own individual style, while learning how to become skilled writers.

Regarding proficiency, Ferris (2002) directs our attention to Brown who gives us "a taxonomy of the stages of error recognition and ability to correct through which learners may pass" (p. 56). By knowing these stages, we are

able to know the difficulties that students faced in the process of learning English. Thus, by knowing these stages, as well as knowing what each stage implies, instructors will know if the students can self-correct mistakes or not, and thus may make more appropriate decisions in offering error feedback to learners at different stages of their language development.

If instructors are also aware of the definition of indirect and direct feedback, and the implications of these, instructors will know how to best respond to students' errors – knowing what type comments they are capable of understanding. As mentioned earlier, Ferris and Roberts (2001) point out that "error correction researchers who have examined the effects of these two contrasting types of feedback have reported that indirect feedback helps students to make progress in accuracy over time more than direct feedback does" (p. 164). They also suggest that indirect feedback gives a chance for the student to be more reflective and analytical in regards to their errors. By having this understanding, instructors will be able to better address students, without confusing them and thus achieves better results in terms of their writing skills.

It appears that instructors in L1 and L2 have researched the best ways to address the needs of their students based on previous research. Considering both of these bodies of scholarship will give instructors a better understanding of strategies for addressing the needs of each one of the groups represented in their classrooms. L2 research should not undermine L1 research in terms of feedback. Rather, they both can lend themselves as a repertoire of knowledge for teachers to better meet the needs of students in writing classrooms.

REFERENCES

Anson, C. M. (1989). *Writing and response: Theory, practice, and research.* Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Brannon, L., & Knoblauch, C. H. (1982). On students' rights to their own texts: A model of teacher response. *College Composition and Communication, 33*(2), 157-166.

Brown, D. H. (1994). *Principles of language and teaching* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Cohen, D. A. (1975). Error correction and the training of language teachers. *The Modern Language Journal, 59*(8), 414-422.

Connors, R. J., & Lunsford, A. A. (1993). Teachers' rhetorical comments on student papers. *College Composition and Communication, 44*(2), 200-223.

Danis, M. F. (1987). The voice in the margins: Paper-marking as conversation. *Freshman English News, 15*(3), 18-20.

Dessner, L. E. (1991). English as a second language writers' revision responses to teacher-written comments. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 5,* 827A.

Dusel, W. J. (2006). Some semantic implications of theme

    correction. In R. Straub (Ed.), *Key works on teacher*

    response: An anthology (pp. 212-220). Portsmouth, NH:

    Boynton/Cook, Inc.

Elbow, P. (1998). Changing grading while working with

    grades. In F. Zak & C .C. Weaver (Eds.), *The theory*

    and practice of grading writing: Problems and

    possibilities (pp. 171-183). New York: State

    University of New York Press.

Elbow, P., & Belanoff, P. (1989). *Sharing and responding.*

    New York: McGraw-Hill.

Ferris, D. (1995). Can advanced ESL students become

    effective self-editors? *CATESOL Journal, 8*(1), 41-62.

Ferris, D. (2006). Does error feedback help student

    writers? New evidence on the short- and long-term

    effects of written error correction. In K. Hyland & F.

    Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in second language writing:*

    Contexts and issues (pp. 81-104). Cambridge: Cambridge

    University Press.

Ferris, D. R. (1996). The case for grammar correction in L2

    writing classes: A response to Truscott. *Journal of*

    Second Language Writing, 8, 1-10.

Ferris, D. R. (1997). The influence of teacher commentary on student revision. *TESOL Quaterly, 31*(2), 315-339.

Ferris D. R. (1999). *One size does not fit all: Response and revision issues for immigrant student writers.* In L. Harklau, K. Losey, & M. Siegal (Eds.), *Generation 1.5 meets college composition* (pp. 143-157). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ferris, D. R. (2002). *Treatment of error in second language student writing.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Ferris, D. R. (2003). *Response to student writing.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ferris, D. R. (2004). The 'grammar correction' debate in L2 writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime?). *Journal of Second Language Writing, 13*(1), 49-62.

Ferris, D. R., Chaney, S. J., Komura, K., Roberts, B. J., & McKee, S. (2000). Does error feedback help student writers? New evidence on the short- and long-term effects of written error correction. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Ferris, D. R., & Hedgcock, J. S. (2005). *Teaching ESL composition: purpose, process, and practice.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ferris, D. R., & Roberts, D. (2001). Error feedback in L2 writing classes: How explicit does it need be? *Journal of Second Language Writing, 10*(3), 161-184.

Fife, J. M., & O'Neill, P. (2001). Moving beyond the written comment: Narrowing the gap between response practice and research. *College Composition and Communication, 53*(2), 300-321.

Francine, D. M. (1987). The voice in the margins: Paper-marking as conversation. *Freshman English News, 15*(3), 18-20.

Gee, T. C. (2006). Students' responses to teacher comments. In R. Straub (Ed.), *Key works on teacher response: An anthology* (pp. 38-45). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, Inc.

Griffin, C. W. (1982). Theory of responding to student writing: The state of the art. *College Composition and Communication, 33*(3), 296-301.

Harklau, L., Losey, K. M., & Siegal, M. (Eds.). (1999). *Generation 1.5 meets college composition: Issues in*

the teaching of writing to U.S.-educated learners of

ESL. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hartman, B., & Tarone, E. (1999). Preparation for college

writing: Teachers talk about writing instruction for

Southeast Asian American students in secondary school.

In L. Harklau, K. M. Losey, & M. Siegal (Eds.),

Generation 1.5 meets college composition: Issues in

the teaching of writing to U.S.-educated learners of

ESL (pp. 99-118). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum

Associates.

Hedgcock, J., & Lefkowitz, N. (1994). Feedback on feedback:

Assessing learning receptivity to teacher response in

L2 composing. Journal of Second Language Writing,

3(2), 141-163.

Hedgcock J., & Lefkowitz, N. (1996). Some input on input:

Two analyses of student response to expert feedback in

L2 writing. The Modern Language Journal, 80(3), 287-

308.

Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (Eds.). (2006). Feedback in second

language writing: Contexts and issues. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.

Kepner, C. G. (1991). An experiment in the relationship of

types of written feedback to the development of

second-language writing skills. *The Modern Language Journal, 75*(3), 305-313.

LaBrant, L. (2006). Marking the paper. In R. Straub (Ed.), *Key works on teacher response: An anthology* (pp. 203-211). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, Inc.

Lam, C. Y. P. (1992). Revision processes of college ESL students: How teacher comments, discourse types, and writing tools shape revision. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 52,* 4248A.

Lasagabaster, D., & Sierra, J. M. (2005). Error correction: student's versus teachers' perceptions. *Language Awareness, 14*(2-3), 112-127.

Leki, I. (1990). Coaching from the margins: Issues in written response. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp. 57-68). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lindermann, E. (1987). *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers.* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mathison, J. F., & O'Neill, P. (2001). Moving beyond the written comment: Narrowing the gap between response practice and research. *College Composition and Communication, 53*(2), 300-321.

Matsuda, P. K. (2003). Basic writing and second language

writers: Toward an inclusive definition. *Journal of*

Basic Writing, 22(2), 67-89.

Matsuda, P. K. (2006). The myth of linguistic homogeneity

in U.S. college composition. *College English, 68*(6),

637-651.

McCurdy, P. (1992). *What students do with composition*

feedback. Paper presentation at the 27th annual Teaching

of English to Speakers of Other Languages Convention,

Vancouver, B.C.

Monroe, B. (2002). Feedback: Where it's at is where it's

at. *The English Journal, 92*(1), 102-104.

Moxley, J. (1989). Responding to student writing: Goals,

methods, alternatives. *Freshman English News, 17*(2),

9-11.

Nayar, B. (1997). ESL/EFL dichotomy today: Language

politics or pragmatics. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*(1), 9-37.

Polio, C., Fleck, C., & Leder, N. (1998). 'If only I had

more time': ESL learners' changes in linguistic accuracy

on essay revisions. *Journal of Second Language Writing,*

7(1), 43-68.

Reid, J. (1994). Responding to ESL students' texts: The myths of appropriation. *TESOL Quarterly, 28*(2), 273-292.

Reid, J. (1998). "Eye" learners and "ear" learners. In P. Byrd & J. Reid (Eds.), *Grammar in the Composition Classroom Essays on Teaching ESL for College-Bound Students* (pp. 3-17). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Robb, T., Ross, S., & Shortreed, I. (1986). Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *TESOL Quarterly, 20*(1), 83-93.

Rumbaut, R. G., & Ima, K. (1988). The adaption of Southeast Asian refuge youth: A comparative study. Final report to the Office of Resettlement. (ERIC ED 299 372). San Diego, CA: San Diego State University.

Singhal, M. (2004). Academic writing and generation 1.5: Pedagogical goals and instructional issues in the college composition classroom. *The Reading Matrix, 4*(3), 1-13.

Sommers, N. (1982). Responding to student writing. *College Composition and Communication, 33*(2), 148-156.

Sommers, N. (1992). Between the drafts. *College Composition and Communication, 43*(1), 23-31.

Straub, R. (1996). Teacher response as conversation: More than casual talk, an exploration. *Rhetoric Review, 14*(2), 374-399.

Straub, R. (Ed.). (2006). *Key works on teacher response: An anthology.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Straub, R., & Lunsford, R. F. (1995). *Twelve readers reading: Responding to college student writing.* Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Sullivan, P. (1986). Responding to student writing: The consequences of some common remarks. *English Journal, 2*, 51-53.

Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning, 46*, 327-369.

Truscott, J. (1999). The Case for " the case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes": A response to Ferris, *Journal of Second Language Writing, 8*(2), 111-122.

Wennerstrom, A. K., & Heiser, P. (1992). ESL student bias in instructional evaluation. *TESOL Quarterly, 26*(2), 271-288.

Wurr, A. J. (2004). English studies and generation 1.5: Writing program administration at the crossroads. *The Reading Matrix, 4*(3), 14-23.

Zacharias, N. T. (2007). Teacher and student attitudes
toward teacher feedback, *RELC Journal, 38*(1)*,* 38-52.

Zak, F, & Weaver, C. C. (Eds.). (1998). *The theory and
practice of grading writing: Problems and
possibilities.* New York: State University of New York
Press.

Zamel, V. (1985). Responding to student writing. *TESOL
Quarterly, 19*(1), 79-101.

Ziv, N. (1984). *The effects of teacher comments on the
writing of four college freshmen.* New York: Guilford.