THE EFFECT OF A FEEDBACK SYSTEM ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN
WRITING
CONFERENCES

by

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(ABSTRACT)

I examined the effect of a feedback system on the
performance of two graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in
writing conferences with their students. Two sets of
conferences were taped and coded for the interactions that
took place and for the content transacted. I established
inter-coder reliability of .84 on interactions and .87 and
.89 on content categories, using Scott's Pi Coefficient,
with two trained coders. The coded tapes were processed
using the "Real Time Observational Data Collection"
microcomputer program. This program provided printouts of
the frequencies and percentages of interactions and content
in each of the GTAs' conferences with students in this
study. After the printouts were generated, I conducted
feedback interviews following the first and second set of
text-based conferences. Transcripts of these taped
feedback interviews were also analyzed.

I found that there were important differences
between the first and second sets of conferences. One GTA
was able, as a result of the feedback system, to alter his

performance in his second set of conferences, becoming more student-centered, clarifying his expectations for students, and modeling appropriate responses to writing. The content of his second set of conferences did not change markedly; however, the content of both sets of conferences dealt with rhetorical issues as the literature recommended. While the second GTA's performance did not change a great deal, her attitude became more consistent with what the literature suggested. The content of her first conferences tended to focus on mechanical or sentence level concerns. Her second set of conferences, however, contained more discussion of rhetorical issues.

Both GTAs attributed most of the changes in their conferences to the feedback system, particularly the printouts that quantified the interactions and content. Finally, the GTAs intentions for their first set of conferences matched their actual performance. When they saw their first printouts, however, they changed their intentions for their second set of conferences, becoming more consistent with what experts contend should be happening in writing conferences.

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told that no one completes a dissertation without the help
and support of many people. During the last year, I have
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter I

SUPPORTING LITERATURE FOR THE RESEARCH

Writing conferences, one-on-one discussions between
students and teachers (Garrison, 1981), have become an
integral part of many writing classes because they provide
a way for individualizing instruction. In some instances
(Garrison, 1981; Murray, 1968), the individual student
conference has become the class, with the student getting
feedback from the teacher who functions in much the same
way as a professional editor. Given the wide-spread use of
conferences today, when I reviewed the literature I
expected to find extensive research pertaining to the
interactions that take place in writing conferences. In
fact, very little research has been done on either the
effectiveness of writing conferences or the interactions
that take place in them.

This lack of substantive research combined with the
widespread use of conferences as an instructional technique
presents particular problems for those of us involved in
teacher training. We quite readily go into classrooms to
observe and evaluate what teachers are doing. Regarding
conferences, however, we usually give our charges some

1

suggestions on what they should do and then turn them
loose. We rerely supervise their efforts in any way, and
we do not attempt to provide them with any useful feedback
that might enhance their instruction in writing
conferences. Brannon (1982), Freedman (1982), and North
(1982) contend that some kind of supervision and feedback
is necessary if teachers are to reach their maximum
effectiveness in writing conferences.

As part of their training, teachers need to be
given feedback on what they are doing in writing
conferences so they can learn how best to handle the
interactions that take place within them. As with other
instructional supervision, this feedback needs to start
with a self-evaluation (Brannon, 1982) where teachers
identify both what is most important in conference
interactions in their opinion and also their perception of
what actually transpires in their writing conferences.
Once they have completed this self-evaluation, they need to
receive feedback that will allow them to compare what they
believe happens in their conferences with what they are, in
fact, doing. A method needs to be developed that will
provide useful feedback to teachers in training but will
not take an excessive amount of a teacher trainer's time to

provide. In this study, I designed and tested one method of providing teachers with feedback on their conferences.

Before I describe this feedback system, I will first place conferences in historical perspective. Then I will review what research reveals about the effect of writing conferences on student performance. Next, I will review what research and expert opinion suggest about what teachers should know before conducting writing conferences, when conferences should be held, how long conferences should be, what content should be transacted, how conferences should be structured, and what factors affect the flow of information in conferences. Finally, I examine the need for training and feedback, state the research problem, and list the research questions that I answer in this study.

A Brief History of Writing Conferences

It was difficult to pinpoint the origin of writing conferences because little specific information exists in the literature. Martin (1980) speculated that the writing conference as we know it today must have evolved from the British tutorial method. This connection seemed reasonable:

> During the Oxford or Cambridge tutorial, the
> student's own writing [remained] the focus of
> discussion, and the close, private contact between
> tutor and student [promoted] free and full exchange
> of ideas. (p. 1)

As Martin described this process, much of what she said

sounded strikingly like Donald Murray's (1968 and 1982)'

assertions about writing conferences. For example, Martin,

like Murray, said that the job of the tutor was not to

teach as much as it was to listen and to encourage students

to defend their thoughts and to challenge the tutor's

perceptions. Further, the focus in the tutorial was on a

method of learning, a way of knowing, rather than the

accumulation of facts (1980:2).

Although the present day writing conference might

have been a descendant of the British tutorial method,

there was no evidence that substantiated a direct link. In

fact, the first reference to writing conferences that I

could find was in a 1939 issue of College English. In this

article, Oakes (1939) said that, although she had been

having conferences with her students, she was forced to

confront their effectiveness when a student said to her one

day, "Thank you so much! I always enjoy these conferences.

After working hard in classes, it is so restful just to sit

and listen" (p. 155). Oakes quickly changed her approach

to conferences. She had her students start keeping a
notebook of faults peculiar to their individual writing.
These faults were to be gathered from comments already
written on the students' papers by Oakes. Then when
students came to conference, they were expected to be able
to discuss intelligently these specific problems they were
having with their papers.

Though by today's standards, this approach appeared
to be a little too error oriented and a little too much
teacher dominated, for its time, Oakes' procedure was
probably enlightened. As Martin (1980) related her
experience with freshman composition conferences in the
early fifties, her experience was probably more
representative of the majority of conferences, if they were
held at all, from the thirties through the early sixties.
Martin reported she had only one conference with her
freshman composition teacher. It came about half way
through the semester and lasted fifteen minutes. During
the conference, her instructor summarized her strengths and
weaknesses as a writer. No other issues were addressed.
According to Martin,

> It would not have occurred to me to ask for help
> from the teacher at any point in the writing of a
> theme. Students thought the grading of themes
> harsh and incomprehensible; we all found the course

a terrifying sink-or-swim experience--almost an
initiation ordeal that decided our fitness for
academic life. (p. 3)

In the late fifties, this stern attitude of

teachers towards students was still prevalent although

things were beginning to change. At the Conference on

College Composition and Communication in 1958, a workshop

held on conferences revealed a variety of practices

regarding conferences in colleges across the country ("Use

of . . . ," p. 197). At some schools, composition

instructors had only one or two conferences per semester,

and these were at the discretion of the instructor. At

other schools, teachers conducted conferences every two

weeks for all students. A few pioneers even experimented

with disbanding the regular class after the first few weeks

and using only conferences thereafter or setting aside one

or two regular class sessions for conference time ("Use of

. . . ," p. 197).

Though these varied approaches to conferences

across the country were promising, the final three

conclusions reached at the end of the workshop indicated

that the value of conferences still was not completely

accepted ("Use of . . . ," p. 198). First, the workshop

participants decided that conferring with each student on a

regular basis was wasteful. Instead, they advocated that
conferences be held at the teacher's discretion. The
student did not have a voice in this decision. Second, the
experiences of those present led them to assert that
conference time should be limited to only the best and
weakest students because these two groups benefitted the
most. Finally, the participants believed that the focus of
a writing conference should be on the writing itself, and
"personal and moral questions" (p. 198) raised by the
students should be scrupulously avoided.

By 1960 there was evidence that some high schools
were beginning to use conferences. Emig (1960) reported
that her school system had success with a high school
English program that used bi-weekly tutorial sessions. To
make these conferences possible, her school superintendent
mandated that the teaching load for English teachers be
reduced to four classes of approximately twenty-five
students during a six period day. The English teachers
were to use the remaining two periods for student writing
conferences. Though more of a dialogue took place between
students and teachers than the examples cited by Oakes and
Martin, the conferences Emig described were still largely
teacher-centered.

A change took place in the approach to conferences in the middle sixties when many attitudes about education began to change in this country. First, there was a shift away from the authoritarian mode of teaching on the part of many teachers, especially at the college level, and a move towards more humane ways of teaching (Martin, p. 3). Also, the sheer number of students, caused by the so-called baby boom era children coming of age, and the loosening of admission standards, for a variety of reasons, forced English teachers to confront the issue of how to relieve their burden of grading many papers (Martin, p. 4). Thus, both philosophical and practical considerations affected the future of conferences.

O'Dea (1965) provided an example of a shift in philosophical concerns regarding teaching in general and the teaching of writing specifically. He took five commonly accepted tenets about the teaching of English and proceeded to take them apart, bit-by-bit. These five myths, as O'Dea called them, were as follows:

1. Students learn to write well by reading great literature.
2. Students learn to write essays by analyzing professionally written essays.
3. Students learn to write well by grammatical analysis.
4. Students learn to write better by reconstructing other people's sentences.

5. Students learn to write better by taking into
   account extensive teacher criticism.
   (O'Dea,1965:228-230)

Those teachers who accepted O'Dea's refutation searched for

different answers to the teaching of writing, especially at

the college level.

Much of this searching and the answers it generated

was the result of teachers honestly looking at what

happened in their classes, perhaps for the first time.

Lindsay (1966) found her class discussions scintillating at

times, but she finally decided to do away with the regular

classroom atmosphere and switch to small discussion groups,

grouped by writing ability, and individual conferences.

She made this switch to groups and conferences because she

observed "over and over again the gap which [occurred]

between a theoretical discussion of a technique and the

process of applying that technique to one's particular

circumstance" (p. 259). She finally realized that in a

regular classroom, she was meeting the needs of only a very

few students. Her conclusion after using this new method

of teaching successfully was that a composition teacher had

two responsibilities: (1) to get kids to write

(unfortunately usually through the desire for good grades)

and (2) to "maneuver a student into such a position that he

will establish his own criteria, his own measurements of
excellence in writing" (p. 259). Like most of the people
at the 1958 CCCC, she found that this approach to teaching
worked best for either the better or the weaker students.

At the time Lindsay made her conclusions about what
a teacher of writing should be trying to accomplish, a
scurry of activity took place as people became aware that
writing actually resulted from a process (Rohman and
Wlecke, 1964; Rohman, 1965). The idea that composing
consisted of prewriting, writing, and rewriting was a
revolutionary concept during the middle sixties. Teachers
began to think about how this three-part process might
affect what they were doing in the classroom.

By this time Murray (1968) had already begun to
hold only student-initiated conferences with his students.
He had long ago given up the regular classroom. He found
that frequent, brief conferences with his students, where
he dealt with just the most important problem in their
writing at that point in its development, worked very well
(p. 150). More importantly, his description of the seven
skills that writers needed to have closely paralleled the
points in the writing process where teachers might
intervene successfully to help students (Aviva Freedman,

1982): the writer should discover a subject, should sense an audience, should search for specifics, should create a design (this might be very informal), should write, should develop a critical eye, and should finally rewrite (pp. 2-11).

So, by the late sixties and into the middle seventies, many writing teachers began to consider more carefully the process of writing and how they might effectively intervene in that process. Teachers gave students more and more control over their own learning. The didactic approach, where teachers had the answers which they gave to students, began to be replaced by a more non-directive approach (influenced by Carl Rogers) which assumed "that most people are quite capable of helping themselves if they are freed from emotional obstacles such as fear of intimidation and fear of failure" (Duke,1975:44). This non-directive approach, however, could succeed only in an environment where grading and emphasis on error were reduced, where both students and teachers recognized that writing resulted from engaging in a process, and where a writing conference was viewed as "an integral part of the writing process" (Duke,1975:46).

In addition to the changes in approaches to writing

conferences that took place at the college level, changes
also occurred at the high school level. In their study of
high school English programs across the nation, Squire and
Applebee (1968) reported that many English teachers saw the
writing conference as a "promising procedure" for the
future of writing instruction (p. 134). Most teachers
surveyed in their study, however, did not use writing
conferences. These teachers found that additional teaching
duties used up the time that otherwise might have been
devoted to conferences. Some teachers, however, did find
the time. McCallister (1970) used conferences successfully
with all of her students. She found that she gave more
attention to the weaker students who particularly needed
help. Conferences also allowed shy students an outlet to
discuss what was on their minds regarding their writing,
and bright students deepened the analysis in their papers
as a result of conferences (p. 233). McCallister used
conferences successfully because she worked in a school
system that limited the student load of English teachers to
100 students. Further, her school had an eight period day.
Because she taught four periods and used one for planning,
she had three relatively "free" periods to hold conferences
with her students. Other school systems were apparently

unable or unwilling to give their English teachers
additional time for conferences. This possibility may
account for the lack of literature on conferences at the
high school level.

At the elementary level, many people began to
examine the use of the writing conference as a way to
provide feedback to elementary age students. Graves (1976)
pointed out that elementary students were totally dependent
on their teachers when it came to writing. Teachers
controlled their students' need to write, when they wrote,
what they wrote, to whom they wrote, how they wrote, and
how their writing would be judged (p. 645). Graves argued
that this dependence on the teacher created a group of
children who could not think for themselves as writers and
who did not develop the critical eye necessary to become
good writers. He suggested that teachers intervene in the
writing of students at different points and encourage the
students to talk about their writing, instead of teachers
pointing out errors they had noted. Graves advocated this
process for two reasons:

> First, children [needed] to hear themselves
> offering opinions. They [gained] a sense of voice
> by first hearing themselves express ideas and
> opinions orally. . . . Second, the teacher

[needed] to gain a sense of children's logical
thinking and interests. (p. 650)

During these interventions or conferences with students,
Graves believed the topics discussed should include voice,
a need for more specifics, language and organization,
progress and change, and the students' sense of audience,
but these topics should come out of concerns about their
writing generated first by students (p. 650). Both Graves
(1976) and Schwartz (1977) described the kinds of teacher
questions and responses that allowed and stimulated
successful, non-threatening intervention.

From the late seventies to the present, conferences
have become increasingly more important as a means of
instruction. Some composition teachers still use
conferences, if they have them at all, in much the same way
Oakes (1939) and Martin (1980) described them: the teacher
talking and the student listening and following orders.
Others, however, convinced by the success of their
colleagues with conferences, are beginning to use
conferences increasingly in their own instruction (Fassler,
1978). Some teachers are not using conferences to discuss
works in progress as much as they are using them in
individual instructional sessions in addition to a regular
class, where both students and teachers write and discuss

what they have written (Schiff, 1978). A few teachers, like Garrison (1981) and Murray (1982) teach writing totally in conferences.

Carnicelli (1980) summarizes why modern composition teachers choose to engage in writing conferences with their students. First, a conference is " more effective than group instruction" (p. 105). He believes that "learning to write is a uniquely personal process; students learn to do it primarily by working on their own papers" (p. 106). In a conference, teachers can do a better job of focusing on the individual needs of their students than they can in a large class. Second, "the teacher makes a more effective response to the paper in an oral conference than in written comments" (p. 106). The main reason for this greater effectiveness is that, with the student present, the teacher has access both to information that only the student can supply and to the student's opinion about what the teacher is saying. This added information allows for more meaningful comments by the teacher. Third, students can learn more from conferences because, instead of passively accepting or rejecting what the teacher has written on the paper, they have the opportunity to discuss with the instructor what is right or wrong with the paper.

They can become more actively involved in their own
learning (p. 107). Fourth, "conferences . . . promote
self-learning" because, even though teachers try to guide
students to see things the teachers' way, the ultimate
decision about whether to accept or reject teacher judgment
about the paper is the responsibility of students (p. 109).
Finally, conferences make the most efficient use of the
teachers' time. After twenty years of teaching, it still
takes Carnicelli twenty minutes to read and respond to a
paper. He believes he could spend the same amount of time
in a conference and accomplish much more.

Statistics regarding the increase, the decrease, or
even the present percentage of English teachers advocating
conferences are not available. Still, the literature
reveals that teachers are interested in writing
conferences. The possible reasons for this interest may be
suggested by Richard Larson (1975):

> The power of making discoveries--of drawing
> connections between bits of experience so that they
> reveal or point to new ideas and problems, of
> asking questions in such a way that they can be
> answered with fresh insights into a subject--is, I
> suggest, one of the powers that makes education
> possible. (p. 5)

Since writing conferences can make this kind of power

available to students, teachers are attracted to
conferences.

The Effect of Writing Conferences
on Student Performance

Information about the effectiveness of writing
conferences is mixed. Most of the evidence is descriptive
in nature where an individual teacher gives a testimonial
about the effectiveness of conferences. Research studies
do exist, but some of them are seriously flawed while the
others, mostly qualitative or ethnographic, are not
generalizable.

The testimonials about the effectiveness of
conferences are usually based on the following assumption:
"To improve one's writing, a writer must have a dialogue
with the reader and must learn to become his or her own
reader" (Almasy, 1982:14). The best way for a teacher to
effect this kind of change is in a conference where the
reader can actually talk to the writer, giving immediate
feedback.

Fisher and Murray (1973) described their successful
conversion to totally conference-centered teaching where
the students had complete control over what they wrote.
They reported that their students resented not having

teacher-generated assignments initially but that they
eventually adjusted (p. 170). Their students learned that
all writers must start with a base of information and
discover what they want to say by writing. Fisher and
Murray learned several things from this experience. First,
standard tests did not accurately predict how well their
students would write under this situation (p. 171). Fisher
and Murray's best students were often their colleagues'
worst students and vice versa. Second, students who might
not have normally responded positively in a classroom
setting, e.g., shy students or those biased in favor of
science to the exclusion of all else, came alive (p. 171).
Third, contrary to popular opinion in the English teaching
profession, Fisher and Murray found that their students
knew they needed help and would actively seek it out if
given a chance. Finally, Fisher and Murray's students did
not "find an easy way to write, because writing is not
easy, but they understood this and expressed familiarity
with the process of writing" (p. 172).

Nixon (1977) reported success using Garrison's
method for conference-centered teaching at the community
college level. She believed that the principal reason for
the success of Garrison's approach is that it turns

students into active learners as opposed to passive
receptacles (p. 23). When the teacher stops "teaching" in
the traditional sense and acts, instead, as a guide and
lets the students determine the pace and direction of their
own writing, Nixon saw students begin to approach their
potential as writers (p. 23).

There are numerous descriptive testimonials like
the ones I have just mentioned. There are, however, only
a few actual studies of the effect of conferences on
writing. Sutton and Arnold (1974), for example, examined
244 remedial students randomly assigned to two groups. One
group of 134 students was assigned to the regular remedial
English course, which included lecture, discussion,
feedback on papers, and a programmed text on writing
problems they could use if they chose. The remaining 110
students worked with tutors in the writing lab and received
no classroom instruction in large groups. Sutton and
Arnold found that working in one group or the other in no
way predicted whether or not a student would stay in
school. They did find that those students who worked in
the writing lab had significantly higher GPAs than their
peers in the regular remedial classes. Sutton and Arnold
thought that those students who were from rural backgrounds

would find the conference setting in the writing lab more beneficial, but there was no significant difference in this sub-group when compared to the rest of the students.

While Sutton and Arnold found that conferences did have a positive effect on remedial student's GPAs, Budz and Grabar (1976) reported that conferences did little to improve the performance of the regular freshman writers that they studied. In fact, most of the students in their study made more progress in writing in a regular classroom setting. There are some inconsistencies in this study, however, that cast some doubt on Budz and Grabar's conclusion. First, students were not randomly assigned to the experimental or control groups. Second, those students in the control group received traditional classroom instruction for the entire semester. The students in the experimental group, after initially meeting as a class, met with their instructors in conferences exclusively for the last eight weeks of the semester. Third, what transpired in the conferences is not specified. The amount of time in conferences and the number of conferences varied for different students. Fourth, improvement or achievement in writing was inferred from the final grade given by the instructor. This grade was determined by comparing the

scores between the pre-test composition and the post-test
composition, both of which were graded blindly by a pair of
graders, one of whom was the instructor. If there was a
dispute about the final grade between the two graders, they
arbitrated the dispute between themselves. Given these
potential sources of error in the study, it is difficult to
accept Budz and Grabar's conclusion without some
reservations.

Like Budz and Grabar, Kates (1977) also examined
the effectiveness of conferences, but he was primarily
concerned with only those kinds of conferences where
comments were shared with students that were similar to
those contained in a terminal comment on a paper. He ran
two experiments to test the effect of feedback given in
conferences on student achievement as opposed to feedback
given in typed comments handed back with the students'
papers. He found no significant difference in the first
experiment, but in the second experiment he found that
conference feedback was significantly better. Like the
work done by Budz and Grabar, there are also some flaws in
this study that make Kates' findings suspect. For example,
in his first experiment one group of students had six
conferences each. These conferences lasted from ninety

seconds to two minutes. Instead of conferences, the other group received their corrected papers with typed terminal comments. Because there was so little interaction between the teacher and the students in either of the groups, it is not surprising that Kates found no significant improvement in either group. During his second experiment, Kates had five conferences per student in the group that was having conferences, and these conferences lasted seven minutes. It would appear that this increased conference time made the difference. However, to prove the significance of increased conference time, Kates averaged stanines as part of his statistical analysis. This procedure casts some doubt on the difference increased conference time alone makes on increased achievement in writing demonstrated by students.

The first three research studies that I have described use grades as the criterion for determining the effect of conferences on student achievement in writing. Freedman (1980) broke this pattern. She made audio tapes of eight students with different levels of writing skill as each student engaged in four conferences throughout a semester. Instead of trying to analyze statistically the changes in the students' writing behavior, she described

qualitatively the interactions that took place in these
conferences and the content discussed. She found important
growth in the students as they progressed through the
semester. For example, a stronger student who was
concerned about his blocked writing process at the
beginning of the semester was no longer having problems
getting words down on paper at the end of the semester.
His time in conference was spent discussing the development
of the ideas he wanted to communicate (pp. 6-7). A weaker
student spent a good portion of her time (49 percent) in
the first conference of the semester talking about problems
she was having with grammar and her distrust of teachers
(21 percent). By the last conference 65 percent of her
time or concerns were aimed at development, but unlike the
brighter student, she was unhappy with the way her paper
was progressing. The paper did not seem to fit together.
Also, she spent 15 percent of her time talking about
problems with grammar (pp. 6-7). It should be noted that
these conferences were held as an integral part of the
class but were conducted outside and in addition to class
time (pp. 1-2). Since there were other possible causes for
these observed changes in behavior, Freedman does not try

to attribute these changes to conferences alone. Still, there appears to be some relationship.

Freedman (1980) concluded that conferences could make a difference in student writing if teachers are astute enough to recognize the concerns that students are actually voicing. Students often reveal what is of most importance to them about their writing, but they do so indirectly. For example, one student said, "We had a paper to do, but I did not do it so I did not do very good in that class" (p. 9). The teacher initially passed over this comment but then came back to it and asked the student why he had not done the paper. The discussion that followed revealed that this student was having difficulty getting words down on paper when first confronted with an assignment. With this knowledge, the teacher was able to tailor instruction in the conference to remove this problem for the student.

Shook (1981) combined qualitative information with statistical analysis to see whether or not writing conferences made a difference in student writing. He used four sections of freshman composition at Brigham Young University, the Hawaii campus. The general direction of the course taken by the students in these sections, including the text and the assignments, was the same. The

experimental group, however, engaged in a modified version
of Garrison's approach to tutoring or conferencing. Shook
found that the experimental group did write significantly
more mature sentences as measured by the number of free
modifers in the students' texts. There was no significant
difference between the writing of the two groups as
measured by holistic scoring. Further, there was no
significant difference between the two groups regarding
writing apprehension as measured on a writing apprehension
test. The teachers using the Garrison method, however, did
feel better about themselves as composition teachers as a
result of using this approach.

Commenting on the data gathered in his 1981 study,
Shook (1983) noticed that the weaker students seemed to
make more gains than the better students (p. 8). Shook
believed that the answer to this dilemma was that the
weaker students have farther to go so we would expect more
gains. On the other hand, he contended that perhaps we
praise good students too quickly and do not stretch or push
them enough. As a result, they become complacent and take
the easy or safe way out (p. 8).

The limited research that has been done reveals
little positive evidence that conferences make a

difference. Granted, it is difficult to control the many variables that affect growth in writing so that a significant gain can be attributed to only one factor (Kates, 1977). The fact remains, however, that there is no major evidence to support that conferences do make a difference in writing instruction. On the other hand, the numerous testimonials about the effectiveness of conferences in teaching writing suggest that something of value is apparently happening. Just what constitutes this "something" is not clear. Roderick (1982) may be right when he says the key to success in conferences is that teachers listen carefully to the problems of students. As a result, students begin to value themselves as people who have something of value to say to others. As Roderick puts it, "After all, the basis for all good writing starts with the writer's belief that he or she has something to say" (p. 32). Much more research needs to be done, however, to specify those factors in conferences that truly have an impact on student writing.

Conducting Writing Conferences

In this section I explore what research and expert opinion suggest teachers should know before they begin to

conduct writing conferences. I also examine what these two sources of information reveal about when conferences should be held, what might be the most effective length of conferences, what content should be transacted, how conferences might be structured, and what factors aid or hinder the flow of information in writing conferences.

What Teachers Should Know Before They Begin Conferences

First, Fassler (1978) suggests a writing conference should not be viewed solely as an opportunity to tell students orally what would normally be written on their papers. She believes that "the nature of the personal conference opens other possibilities as well, and these should be exploited" (p. 188). She believes the teacher's response to students should be personal and student writing should be approached in much the same way a parent would approach a child's drawing. A parent looks for the strong points and initially ignores the flaws.

Second, Murray (1982) points out that most writers first write for themselves. As they do, they have another self which monitors what they are doing as they compose. Murray believes that a teacher's job in a writing conference is to teach this other self. This job is accomplished through modeling an ideal self for the student

so that eventually the student's other self will be able to take over this function when the teacher is no longer there. In other words, a teacher's job is to be a good role model of how a critical reader responds to a piece of writing.

Murray thinks that teachers can accomplish this feat only if they recognize that "writing is [an] intellectual activity carried on in an emotional environment" (p. 142). Sulkes (1980) extends Murray's idea to conferences. He believes that the emotional environment is very important in writing conferences, and teachers need to deal with this aspect first before they ever begin talking specifically about the writing the student is currently doing (p. 4). Much of the emotional environment comes from the attitudes, assumptions, and expectations that both students and teachers bring to the conference. Sulkes believes that students must bring the following attitudes to a conference in order for it to function properly:

1. The student wants to be there because he or she has important business to transact.
2. The student has a clear sense of what he or she wants from the teacher. The student gives evidence of having carefully considered comments that the teacher has made about

writing in general or regarding a specific
paper.
3. The student recognizes that the teacher is
human and can make mistakes.
4. The student knows what the teacher can and
cannot do for him or her. (pp. 1-2)

A great deal of counter-productive feeling can be generated
in a conference if a student lacks any one of these
attitudes or if the teacher assumes that the students have
this frame of mind regarding the conference when, in fact,
they do not. For example, Sulkes cites the instance of the
students who operate

on the erroneous assumption that the teacher's job
is to make [them] understand, or, if [they have]
been raised on Sesame Street, on the assumption
that the teacher must make it easy or entertaining,
or worse, must provide [them] with the magic
formula that will transmute a leaden theme to
literary gold. (p. 2)

A student who has these inaccurate assumptions will not
learn much of value in a conference.

Sulkes also contends that students are not alone
when it comes to erroneous assumptions about conferences
and teachers' roles in them (1980, p. 2). Teachers also
frequently make assumptions that contribute to the
breakdown of a conference. They assume students want to be
there for the conference, whether they do or not. Also,
even teachers with the best intentions tend to force what
they think is important upon students. If students and

teachers do not have a shared purpose for being in a writing conference, then there is a good chance it will fail.

Murray (1982) suggests that one way to avoid this confusion over inaccurate assumptions and expectations is for teachers to tell students exactly what the teachers' role will be in conferences. This way, students have some idea of what to expect. Brostoff (1982) focuses the discussion in the initial conference she has with any student on the following issues: "the student's writing ability, experience, and attitudes; then from a determination of the problem at hand to questions about the student's handling of the writing process" (p. 25). More importantly, during the first third of this initial conference, Brostoff and her colleagues try very hard to create a positive emotional environment as they strive to achieve the following goals:

> (1) by our responses to students, to help them perceive us as writing experts who can serve as their personal consultants; (2) by our careful ordering of questions, to help students relax, thereby enabling them to discover informative answers; and (3) by our choice of questions, to help students lift the veil of self-deception and begin to develop an accurate perception of their writing ability and a positive attitude about what they can do. (p. 22)

Teachers may not achieve all of the goals cited by Brostoff

(1982). Experts do seem to agree, however, that teachers
who are conducting writing conferences need to be aware of
the emotional environment in their conferences and to
monitor this environment as their conferences progress.

When Conferences Should Be Held

Bissex (1982) and others believe that interventions
can take place at any point in the writing process. Murray
(1979) implies that prewriting conferences are more
valuable than revision conferences. He says that he is
more active in prewriting conferences, but he "leans back"
as pieces develop further (p. 17). Carnicelli (1980)
thinks that conferences held during the prewriting stage
and during the actual writing and revision of the piece are
more helpful than conferences held after a grade has been
given to a paper. He does think that conferences after
grading can be of some value, but students are less
receptive to assistance, especially if they have gotten a
low grade on the paper (pp. 102-102).

Freedman (Aviva Freedman, 1982) elaborates upon the
usual three-part description of the writing process:
prewriting, writing, and revision. As she does so, she
discusses the kinds of interventions that might be made at
each point in the composing process. First, there is the

starting point. Here teachers and students can discuss possible topics until students have a clear direction or place to begin writing (pp. 6-7). Second, after a starting point is decided upon, writers usually explore this topic. Teachers can help students best here by modeling for them how to play with ideas and mine their brains for information they already have about the topic (p. 8). Third, during the next three stages in the writing process--incubation, illumination, and composing--teachers cannot really make any direct interventions because these parts of writing are personal and usually occur inside the brain. Teachers, however, can support students by encouraging them "to trust their writing and to follow its flow regardless of previous plans and regardless of the possible judgments and evaluations of their readers" (p. 9). Also, teachers can be there to help students work out any problems encountered during this part of the process.

Fourth, after writers have written a draft, they usually go through a period of reformulating what they have written. At this stage writers usually need some feedback on how a real audience is responding to their work. Teachers can be the real audience in a conference, letting

students know how the writing is affecting them as readers
(p. 11). Finally, during the editing stage, teachers can
be most helpful if they assist the students with one or two
major problems the student is having with surface errors
(p. 11).

How Long Should Writing Conferences Be

The length suggested for a conference varies.
Kates (1977) has held conferences lasting only ninety
seconds, but he questions the value of a conference this
short. Garrison (1981) says a lot can be accomplished in
two minutes. Martin (1981) observes, however, that most
teachers, even those who are experienced, find it almost
impossible to conduct conferences this short and accomplish
anything. Murray (1968) believes that conferences should
last about ten minutes, though he notes they should be held
frequently. Fisher and Murray (1973) suggest that
conferences be no longer than fifteen minutes. Fassler
(1978) and Carnicelli (1980) advocate twenty-minute
conferences while Budz and Grabar (1976) and the workshop
at the Conference on College Composition and Communication
Convention ("Use of . . .," 1956) mention conferences as
long as an hour. Generally, the length of a conference
should be determined by the teacher. With practice,

teachers learn how much time they can meaningfully spend conducting a conference with a student.

What Should the Content of Writing Conferences Be

Freedman (1982) asserts that the success of a conference depends upon two crucial factors: the content of the conference and its structure (p. 2). The content includes such things as "what topics are talked about, the amount of collaboration between student and teacher talk in sustaining topics, the amount of focus on different topics, and who initiates talk and how often talk gets initiated on certain topics" (pp. 2-3). The structure basically is determined by "who can talk when and how much [and] what types of talk are sequenced in what ways" (p. 2).

The content of a conference, of course, will be a function of the point in the writing process at which the conference is taking place. Garrison (1981) follows a heirarchy of priorities regarding content when he conducts conferences. He believes that the initial conference must deal with the idea or subject the student wants to write about. If this issue is not dealt with, the student has no place to go, nowhere to begin (p. 9). For Garrison and for other teachers, e.g., Fisher and Murray (1973), deciding on the topic might be the focus of two or three conferences.

Next, Garrison (1981) deals with the content of what the student has written. He particularly stresses the difference between that which is concrete and that which is vague. He wants students to recognize that they cannot begin to write very much if they do not have sufficient information to continue (p. 10). Fisher and Murray (1973) also confirm this belief.

The next content focus in conferences for Garrison (1981) is point of view. He wants students clearly to identify the point of what they are writing and the audience they are writing to or for (p. 10). The next content priority is organization. The student should have completed a draft by this time, and Garrison takes a look at the organization of the piece, to consider whether or not it is coherent. Organization can be the subject of more than one conference (p. 10). At the next level of content, Garrison concentrates on his students' sentences and uses their writing to work on individual grammatical problems (p. 10). Finally, he focuses on matters of word choice, spelling, tone, and sentence cadence (p. 11).

This content hierarchy is very similar to the one experienced writers use when they are writing and revising (Murray, 1968). Further, Garrison's heirarchy is similar

to the one that many teachers follow in conferences.
Carnicelli (1980) clearly states that he uses Garrison's
hierarchy.

How Should Writing Conferences Be Structured

The structure of conferences is difficult to
specify because no two conferences will be identical.
Graves (1982), Bissex (1982), and Duke (1975) believe that,
whatever structure is used, it should be predictable to
students. This predictability helps reduce anxiety. If
students know what to expect from the conference, they will
be more likely to respond openly. Both Duke (1975) and
Murray (1982) contend it is a good idea to let the student
know beforehand what is going to happen in the conference.

Creating predictability to reduce student anxiety
seems like a reasonable goal to strive for, but conferences
can be structured in many different ways. Arbur (1976)
gives a description of the seminal conference. Not every
conference will have or need each of these stages, but her
sequence does seem to address most of the structural
possibilities. Arbur believes that writing conferences
have seven possible components: "engagement, problem
exploration, problem identification, agreement to work on
the problem together, task assignment, solution, and

termination" (pp. 96-97).

Engagement. Though the most obvious, engagement is
perhaps one of the most crucial phases of any conference.
Rapport must be established between students and teachers,
and the first words uttered and the first behaviors
exhibited by both parties determine whether or not rapport
is achieved. If students exhibit an "I could care less"
attitude, this feeling may affect the way teachers respond
to students. Conversely, if teachers communicate an air of
superiority, this attitude also may confound the
conference. Often subtle messages are communicated to
students by the way students and teachers are arranged in
space. Of the following possible arrangements, Arbur
(1976) and Murray (1968) recommend an arrangement that
suggests equality, such as example D below:

```
     (A)              (B)              (C)              (D)
                       S                S
      _____            _____            _____            _____        S
S   |     | T       |     | T       |     |          |     |     T
    |desk |         |desk |         |desk |          |desk |
    |     |         |     |         |     | T        |     |
    |_____|         |_____|         |_____|          |_____|
```
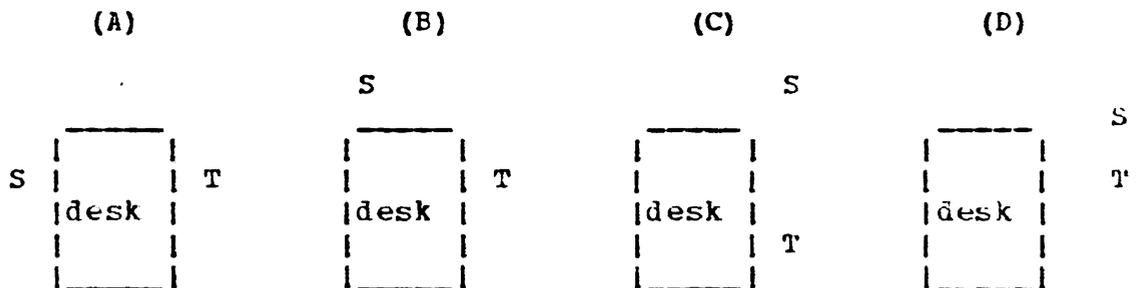
Such placement communicates to students that this

conference is going to be a shared effort, where both parties are going to be doing the work.

Also of prime importance at this stage in the conference is that both teachers and students understand the difference between what students are capable of (aptitude) and what in fact they have done (performance) on a particular paper (Arbur, 1976: 97). Teachers should convey and support the idea that students can improve their performance with effort and with help.

Problem Exploration. During this phase of the conference, students must come to some understanding of the problems in their papers. This exploration should be a shared experience, not a lecture on the part of teachers, or as Arbur says, "one person pontificating, the other neither hearing or caring what is said" (p. 98). Probably the best way for teachers to approach this exploration is through nondirective or Socratic techniques. Carnicelli believes that two of the most crucial things teachers can do in a conference is to ask the right questions and to listen to what students say (1980, pp. 114-117). Through skillful questions, students are led to their own discovery about both what is right and wrong with their papers. Murray also confirms this strategy (1968 and 1978).

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Problem Identification. This feature may seem very
similar to the previous category, but actually it is not.
In this phase of the conference, after various problems
with the students' papers have been explored, the most
important ones must be identified (Arbur,1976:98). This
focusing process is crucial for several reasons. First,
students usually cannot handle all that is potentially
wrong with a paper. To do so is often realistically and
psychologically impossible. People seldom improve any
skill all at once. They improve by practicing different
parts of it, still in the context of the whole. Arbur,
recommends that only two major problems be specified for
students. Obviously, depending upon the nature of the
paper, the number may vary.

But what kinds of problems should teachers point
out to students? If the conference is centering on a draft
of a paper, whether a first draft or a later one, then
teachers must make some decisions. First, they must answer
the following question: what is the problem that is
keeping this paper from working? Typically, the larger
rhetorical issues such as ideas or subject, content, point
of view, and organization should be dealt with first.

Matters of sentence structure and word choice should be
considered later unless these are negatively affecting the
larger issues (Garrison,1981:8-11; Murray,1968:2-11). The
rationale for this approach is rather straighforward. If
the idea or subject has not been articulated, the
organization tightened, and the writing finally aimed at a
specific audience, excellent grammar and sentence structure
are not going to make the paper work.

Agreement to Work on the Problem Together. After
the major problem or problems with the paper have been
identified, according to Arbur, "the student[s] not only
[have] to agree about what the problem is but [have] to
agree to do something [about it] . . ." (p. 98). This
decision is usually negotiated and agreed to by the student
and the teacher. Arbur cautions that this portion of the
conference can often drift into a heated discussion about
the content of the paper, i.e., the relative rightness or
wrongness of the students' position on an issue. Such
digression should be avoided. The purpose of the
conference should be to help students improve what it is
they want to say, regardless of teachers' approval or
disapproval of the ideas contained in the paper. The only

point of discussion should be whether or not students have
supported their position.

   Task Assignment. Once students and teachers have
agreed to work on the problem, teachers should give
students clear-cut directions about what they should do to
rectify the problem(s). According to Carnicelli (1980),
these suggestions should not be didactic (pp. 116-117).
Students should be given suggestions; but, as they are
given, teachers should check with students to see how they
are being received. Teachers should not impose their
preferences on their students. Students should be given
help to develop their own solutions, and the final decision
about what course of action to take should be left to the
students.

   Solution. According to Arbur (1976, pp. 99-100),
students and teachers should agree on tasks that students
need to be working on as a result of the issues discussed
in conferences. Agreeing on and specifying these tasks
gives students a tangible result from the conferences. It
is not so important that students have "the solution" as it
is that they recognize what they have accomplished and know
what to work on next. Students and teachers should meet

again in follow-up conferences to discuss the remedies that students have atempted. This type of approach, identifying what needs to be done and then meeting again to discuss the results, is effective because it requires commitment on the part of students. It also gives students time to incubate, to explore possible solutions, and to try several of them before they return to share what they have done with their teachers. The students' increased involvement with their own writing not only reinforces their commitment to finding a solution to the problem but also makes better use of the teachers' time (Arbur,1976:99). Teachers can be more focused during the subsequent conferences because they know what was discussed previously and what was suggested. Therefore, they can zero in on whether or not the students have solved the problem.

Termination. Ending the conference appropriately is just as important to maintaining rapport with students as is the intitial engagement. Carnicelli (1980) believes that teachers need especially to offer encouragement to students at this point (p. 113). Maintaining rapport at the end of a conference is easily accomplished if students have a clear sense of what they need to do next with their writing.

Factors Which Affect the Flow of Information in Writing Conferences

Structuring conferences effectively and discussing the appropriate content are not by themselves sufficient requisites for conferences that will help students with their writing. Teachers also need to be aware of several factors which can either aid or hinder the flow of information between students and teachers. Duke (1975) encourages teachers who want to make writing conferences more non-directive, as opposed to didactic, to adopt some of the techniques used in counseling. First, Duke believes that it is important for the teachers to provide clarification for students. This process involves letting students know that what they say has been heard and accepted. For example, teachers might say something like "I can tell that you meant to show us the scene from her position on the street" (p. 45). Second, teachers should use acceptance words where possible, e.g., "Yes, 1 see" (p. 45). Such a statement implies acceptance, though no value judgment is made. Third, Duke contends that it is important to use reassurance phrasing with students--"1 know. I have felt the same way"(p. 45)--because it reduces the feeling of alienation that students sometimes feel. Finally, Duke believes that it is important to use the

non-directive lead, which prompts students to talk about
their writing without teachers doing the work, e.g., "Could
this section be stated in more than one way?" (p. 45).

Duke's suggestions are good ones, but Carnicelli
(1980) warns teachers that to follow only such a non-
directive approach would be unfair to students. Carnicelli
gives the following rationale for his position:

> The teacher's function is to lead students to adopt
> the teacher's values, the common criteria of good
> writing shared by the teacher, the English teaching
> profession, and, with certain wide variations,
> educated people in general. The therapist's
> function is to lead clients to clarify or develop
> their own individual values. Because of this basic
> difference in function, the writing teacher has the
> obligation to be more judgmental, and more
> directive, than a therapist should be in the
> Rogerian approach. (p. 116)

In fact, Carnicelli reports that students surveyed at his
institution perceive that teachers who are totally non-
directive are unwilling to take a stand. Students want the
teacher to be involved in the conference, too (p. 115).

Graves (1982) believes that successful conferences
are created when both the teacher and the student approach
them with a degree of playfulness: "Humor relieves tension
and provides distance from the composing process" (p. 77).
In a conference that is functioning effectively, "writing
is not approached as a tedious, grueling attempt to avoid

sinful error. Rather, there is a sense of surprise, of joyful pursuit of the writer's own intentions" (p. 77).

Additionally, teachers and students need to share the same nomenclature when talking about writing (Graves, 1982). Teachers already know how to talk about writing, but students often do not. As a result, students need to learn how to use language to talk about their writing. This special use of language need not be taught in a traditional manner, i.e., a vocabulary list followed by tests. Rather, this language can be introduced within the context of talking about the student's writing. For example, a teacher might ask, "I see that you crossed out your lead here in the first draft. Why did you do that?" (p. 77). Students might never have heard the words lead or draft before, but in the context of dealing with their own writing, the meaning of these words is communicated clearly by the teacher and learned by students over time, through meaningful repetition.

Graves (1982), Bissex (1982), and Carnicelli (1980) believe that the flow of information in conferences can be enhanced by how teachers model solutions to problems students are having with their writing. Modeling solutions does not mean that teachers should always tell students

what to do. Instead, "Good teachers show what they mean instead of [telling] children what to do. They ask writers to try things that will enable them to see answers for themselves" (Graves, p. 76). Using questions skillfully and providing the right kind of feedback will help students to think for themselves. Sometimes questions of a general nature will be sufficient to get students to examine on their own what they need to do to improve a piece of writing. Questions of this kind that others find helpful include:

1. What would you like me/us to listen for and react to? (Ask this before the writer reads aloud his piece.)
2. What part do you like the best?
3. What part gave you the most trouble?
4. What did you consider putting in and then decide against?
5. What would you like to change in you next draft?
6. What did you learn from writing this piece?

(Bissex, p. 76)

Often, however, more specific kinds of questions will need to be asked if teachers are going to guide students in the right direction. For example, suppose the main point of a piece of writing is not clear. Instead of telling students their writing is unclear, it may be more productive to ask the following question: "Is there a sentence here that seems to say what you wanted to say more

than any other?" (Graves, 1976, p. 650). If the students

cannot find one, the teacher, through questioning, can help

students see their own problems and find ways to solve

them. Or, if there is a problem with organization, the

teacher can ask, "Do you think this sentence ought to come

after this one? Read it out loud and tell me what you

think" (Graves, 1976, p. 650). Perhaps, students need to

be more specific. Instead of telling them, teachers can

use the following kinds of questions and responses:

> What happened after the man won the race? Good. I
> would be interested in reading what happened.
>
> You say he had an accident in the race. What
> happened to the car? What did the front fender and
> the [headlight] look like after it hit the guard
> rail? Here are some words you just used in telling
> me about the accident. Would you like to use them?
> (Graves,1976:650)

In addition to asking questions that guide and

instruct, teachers need to know techniques for shifting the

focus of the conference without confusing the student in

the process. For example, a student might come in and be

consumed by an upcoming midterm exam. Sherwood (1982,

p. 102) asserts that teachers need to acknowledge such

concern but still move the focus of the conference to

writing. After listening for a while, this turn might be

accomplished by saying something like, "I know what you

mean. I have been working on an article for two weeks, and I cannot get it the way it needs to be to get published. Plus, the deadline is the day after tomorrow. But, let's leave those problems for a while. What have you been writing about" (p. 102)?

Another turn that Sherwood (1982, p. 103) contends teachers need to learn to make smoothly is when the focus of a conference needs to shift to something else. Once the student gets a sense of how to solve the most difficult problem he or she faces in a piece of writing, there is little value in belaboring the point. To redirect the conference, the teacher might say something like, "Well, Joe, it seems to me that you have finally got a handle on what you want to say. Since the story you tell on page 2 is so important to your overall point, let's take a look at it and see if it's working the way you want it to" (p. 103).

Finally, the way closure is achieved at the end of a conference, the interaction that causes it to happen, is important. Instead of ending with a few general comments, Sherwood (1982) suggests that teachers ask students to summarize what has been discussed in the conference; for example, the teacher might say, "Before you go, let's make

sure that we both know what it is you need to do in this paper. Could you summarize the main points we have discussed today" (p. 103)? If the teacher asks a question of this kind, it not only helps the student clearly articulate what it is he or she needs to do to improve the paper but also provides the teacher with feedback about whether or not the student is clear about what has been discussed.

Teachers cannot keep all of these techniques in balance consistently: using non-directive techniques, maintaining a sense of humor, teaching the special language necessary to talk about writing, asking questions that both guide and instruct, and making smooth turns in a conference. The more teachers are able to use these techniques, however, the more they will be able to keep a conference running smoothly.

What Consensus Exists among Experts

Even though there is a lot of advice and suggestions about what should be happening in writing conferences, experts do seem to agree that five features are necessary for an effective conference to take place.

Student-Centered. First, writing conferences should be student-centered. The meaning of the term "student centered," however, depends upon who defines it. Lindsay (1966) means that students should be led by teachers to develop their own criteria for judging the effectiveness of their writing. Murray (1968) contends that conferences should only be initiated by students and should deal with the major problems in the students' writing. Fisher and Murray (1973), as a result of their experience in totally conference-centered teaching, assert that students should also have control over the subjects of their writing, in addition to charting the direction of the conference. Graves (1976) supports the idea that students should talk about their writing in conferences, free from the distraction of teachers constantly pointing out student error. Nixon (1977) portrays teachers as guides with students determining the direction in their own writing and thus developing their full potential as writers. Carnicelli (1980) maintains that conferences need to be student centered because such conferences provide students with the opportunity for self-learning and control, the right to accept or reject suggestions by teachers. The underlying current that runs through each of these

descriptions of what student centered means, is that students should have some control over what happens in conferences. Most of these descriptions do not deny the important feedback that can be given by the teacher. They do, however, suggest that students should be taking an active role in conferences, suggesting topics for discussion in addition to those identified by teachers. What all of these experts seem to have in mind is a partnership, both parties participating equally, neither party dominating--especially the teacher.

Interventions at Different Points. Second, several experts believe that conferences can be effective only when several are held and, furthermore, held at different points in the writing process. When these experts say "writing process," they usually employ the common linear description of this process--prewriting, writing, and revision--though the exact terminology may differ from one person to the next. Bissex (1982), Graves (1976), and Duke (1975) agree that interventions should be made in student writing at several points as a piece of writing progresses. Murray (1968;1979) describes several conferences that he has had with students as their writing developed from stage to stage. He says that he is more active in earlier

(prewriting) conferences and tends to relax more, letting the students do more of the work, in conferences taking place later in the evolution of a piece of writing. Carnicelli (1980) concurs with the opinion of those experts I have just mentioned. He adds, however, the conferences that take place after a piece of writing has been graded are generally a waste of time. Students are not committed to what transpires in such conferences because they usually are unable (in terms of grade) to do anything else to improve their paper. Garrison (1981) asserts that interventions should be made as students wrestle with those elements of content that he feels are most important to a piece of writing (idea or subject, content, point of view, audience, organization, and sentences, and individual grammatical problems).

Freedman (Aviva Freedman, 1982) also agrees with the others, though she describes the writing process as having seven steps instead of the usual three. The general consensus seems to be that interventions in student writing need to be made as often as is possible and at any point in the process students use to create a paper, with the possible exception of so-called post-mortems after grading.

Clarification of Student Expectations. Third,
Graves (1982), Bissex (1982), and Duke (1975) assert that
students should have a clear idea of what to expect in
conferences if they are to reach their maximum
effectiveness. Simply, they believe that students should
not be "put on the spot" by teachers who expect them to
assume roles that they did not anticipate. The inverse of
this situation also holds true. To prevent such
misunderstandings, Murray (1982) suggests that teachers
make sure that both they and their students understand the
ground rules of what is going to happen in conferences
before they ever begin to discuss the writing.

Modeling Appropriate Solutions. Fourth, Bissex
(1982), Graves (1982), Murray (1982) and Carnicelli (1980)
believe that it is important that teachers model
appropriate behaviors in conferences for students. Such
modeling can, in time, acclimate students to what kind of
behaviors are appropriate in conferences. More
importantly, however, modeling allows teachers to
demonstrate possible solutions to problems students are
having with their writing. Students expect such modeling,
and rightly so. As Carnicelli (1980) points out, according
to his survey teachers who are totally non-directive in

conferences and never point out potential problems or demonstrate possible solutions are viewed as ineffective by students. Modeling, does not need to be didactic. It can take the form of skillful questions which guide students to solutions to their own problems (Graves, 1982). Murray (1982) probably summarizes the intent of most experts. He says that teachers should model an ideal self as a writer, showing students how they should be reacting to what they have written. Students can then internalize this model into their own behavior patterns as they engage in conferences with the teacher.

Priority Given to Larger Content Issues. The last point of consensus about a potentially ideal conference regards content. Though Garrison (1981) specifies a rather rigid heirarchy to the content transacted in writing conferences, Freedman (1982), Carnicelli (1980) and Garrison (1981) seem to agree with Murray's (1968) basic approach to revision in the way they structure the content of their conferences. These theorists tend to agree that the larger rhetorical issues of shape, form, and audience should be focused on first. Sentence level or grammatical concerns should be dealt with in later conferences. For example, most experts believe that a first conference on a

student paper that dealt only with subject and verb agreement and punctuation would not be either appropriate or effective. If the larger issues, such as the overall shape of the piece of writing, are addressed in previous conferences, then a conference dealing with only surface problems might be justified.

These five points of agreement among experts on writing conferences should be important to teachers as they shape the form of their writing conferences. Most agree that the better conferences do seem to fulfill these requirements.

The Need for Training and Feedback

Experienced teachers and educators--for example, many of those I have cited in this chapter--have an intuitive sense of what makes a good conference. Even these teachers of writing, however, can only guess to a large extent about what really happens in their conferences. What they think may be happening may not, in fact, be accurate. For example, Carnicelli (1980) cites some work being done by a colleague of his, Wilburn Sims, that illustrates how this gap between perception and reality happens:

> In conference after conference he [finds] the same
> basic pattern: the teacher asks a question then
> ends up providing the answer to it. This process
> occurs in two ways. In one, the student simply
> makes noncommittal responses to the question until
> the teacher finally supplies a direct answer. In
> the other, the student draws "hints" from the
> teacher, then "pieces together" an answer that is,
> in reality, the teacher's own. Sims [notes] that
> teachers seem generally unaware that this process
> is going on, and often praise their own ideas as
> original contributions by the student. (p. 118)

Additional research done by Jacob (1982) substantiates

Sims' findings. Contrary to the advice of those teachers

(like Murray and Duke) who believe that students should

take an active role in conferences, Jacob finds that the

direction of the flow of information in writing conferences

is from the teacher to the student. Further, most students

find this teacher to student flow comfortable.

Thus, despite what many experts in writing research

and teaching say, much of what actually happens in writing

conferences is the opposite of the experts' advice and

perception of what should happen. As Jacob points out,

just putting two people together in a writing conference

does not guarantee that it will be a productive use of

time. In fact, well-meaning instructors may confound their

own best intentions. Bowles (1979) confirms Jacob's

contention.

If even experienced teachers misinterpret what they

think is happening in writing conferences, the situation
for inexperienced teachers may be worse. Their plight is
very similar to the situation that most student writing
tutors find themselves in. According to Bell (1981:7-8),
tutors may not view themselves as successful writers,
though they have managed to learn how to compensate for
their weaknesses and cope with the frustration of writing.
Added to this negative self-image as writers, since their
training is not yet complete, tutors may lack the knowledge
necessary to solve some of the problems they will face in
conferences (Smith, 1975). Some kind of training is
needed, but what kind? Olson (1981:317) believes that
well-trained tutors can have a positive impact on students.
Garrett (1982:94), however, cautions that if tutors are too
well trained they may adopt practices that are carbon
copies of what their trainers do. Chances are they will
never develop their full potential as tutors or teachers in
a conference situation.

Some kind of training is needed for teachers if
they are to learn how to conduct writing conferences with
any real degree of success. Logically, this training
should probably occur in the milieu of actual writing
conferences or at least practice sessions which closely

resemble the real thing (North,1982:436-437).

Brannon (1982) believes that those who are being trained to conduct writing conferences first have to identify what their actual or preferred role in a conference is. Whatever role they choose will be a "contributing factor" to the success or failure of a conference (p. 106). Brannon (p. 106) believes there are four possible roles:

1. Facilitator: the teacher acts as a reader who gives the writer immediate feedback.

2. Supporter: the teacher "acts as a coach, encouraging the student and regarding his or her accomplishments"

3. Leader: the teacher "prod[s] or pressure[s] tutees to focus their energy on the writing assignment"

4. Resister: both the teacher and the student are unable to find "a common ground on which to proceed"

Brannon believes that those responsible for training tutors or teachers can find out what role trainees play or prefer to play in conferences by asking them to engage in activities such as brainstorming, free writing, or keeping journals that deal with this issue (p. 106). If trainers directly ask trainees for this information, trainees may not be able to provide it. Brannon thinks some kind of

self-evaluation on the trainee's part seems to be called
for.

Brannon also contends that once trainers know what
roles trainees prefer, trainers are then in a position to
"show [teachers] how their words and behavior can hinder or
help" a writing conference (p. 106). One thing is certain:

> Unless teachers and student writers share the
> process of developing meaning in writing during the
> teacher-student conference, it is probable that
> teachers will dominate that process. Such
> dominance suggests that teachers, not students, are
> learning to make writing meaningful. (Collins,
> 1979, p. 1)

The nature of this feedback to the teacher in training can,
according to Brannon (1982), involve recording what a tutor
or a teacher in training says in a conference or
videotaping a session, whether a practice conference or the
real thing (p. 107). Brannon believes that once teachers
in training review this material, they will immediately be
able to see what is actually happening in their conference
(p. 107).

Freedman (1982) supports Brannon's optimism that
teachers can recognize the dynamics, both the strengths and
the weaknesses, of their performance if they are provided
feedback. When the teacher in Freedman's study examined
transcripts of her conferences, she was shocked to find

that she did exhibit favoritism to certain kinds of students, even though she consciously tried to treat all students the same. Freedman believes that any means which allows this kind of information to be brought to conscious level will allow teachers to begin to understand "the types of student behaviors that lead even the best of us to treat students differently" (p. 13). Freedman also emphasizes the students' role in the conference because she feels that it is not just the teacher who is responsible for either the success or the failure of a conference: "It is the interaction between [the teacher and the student] that leads to different results for different students" (p. 13).

In an earlier study Freedman (1981) concludes that the information teachers can gather about both their own performance and their students' performance can have a positive effect on future conferences and their productivity and effectiveness. For example, it took the teacher in Freedman's study almost an entire semester to recognize that one of her students was overly concerned about error. Had the teacher recognized this sooner, she might have been able to allay some of the student's frustrations about error and as a result, moved the student

to higher levels of discussion about writing much sooner
(p. 13).

It seems that teachers in training need to be given
some kind of feedback on what they are doing in writing
conferences. The problem is how to provide this feedback
effectively and efficiently. Numerous strategies are
available to help those who train teachers to provide
feedback on what happens in classrooms. For example, the
Conference on College Composition and Communication has
established a committee to develop ways to evaluate writing
instruction. They have developed several evaluation
instruments that are useful in guiding trainers and
supervisors as they evaluate classroom performance, the
preparation of assignments, and the nature of written
comments on student papers (Evaluating . . . ," pp.
213-229).

Flanigan (1979) has developed a procedure for
providing feedback to both experienced and inexperienced
teachers of writing on their classroom performance. His
procedure is based on three assumptions:

1. Knowing what individual teachers want to
   accomplish is essential to helping them with
   their teaching.

2. Teachers need information about their own
   teaching styles and not some hypothetical
   "best" way to teach.

3. Detailed information about teaching is more
   valuable to teachers than generalized
   evaluations. (p. 17)

With these assumptions in mind, Flanigan (1979)
suggests that supervisors first have an interview with
teachers who are going to be observed. During this
interview, teachers are encouraged to share what they
believe to be the most important strengths of their
teaching. During this discussion, the supervisor tries to
get a sense of how the teachers perceive themselves in the
classroom. Then the supervisor arranges a time when he or
she can come into the teachers' classes to observe. During
the observation, the supervisor records as completely as
possible everything that happens during the class. The
supervisor then again meets with the teachers who have been
observed, and the supervisor orally interprets his or her
notes, emphasizing those features that the teachers said
were most important in their teaching.

Flanigan's evaluation procedure is similar to the
more elaborate clinical model for evaluation developed by
Goldhammer (1969). The essential difference between
Flanigan's approach and Goldhammer's is that Goldhammer

tries to guide the teachers to identify crucial discrepancies between what they say they are doing and what they are in fact doing. Flanigan is not quite as aggressive on this point. Somewhat similar to the oral and written data provided as part of the clinical models of Flanigan and Goldhammer are the procedures developed by Flanders (1967), which involve the coding of the interactions that take place in a classroom and then sharing this more objective kind of data with teachers. At the heart of this process lies the assumption that if teachers are given data that allow them to compare their intentions with what they are actually doing, they will be able to modify their behaviors so that intention and performance more closely match. In a study done under the auspices of the U.S. Office of Education involving 55 teachers from two different junior high schools, Flanders (1967) has found that to be effective such training must have certain characteristics. First, data from at least two observational sessions should be used, so that teachers have a more reliable basis for comparison. Second, the supervisor should function as a clarifier, only commenting or helping the participating teacher to interpret the data on the feedback printouts provided. Flanders has

discovered that such attention places the emphasis on the teacher's performance as opposed to the desires of the supervisor. He has determined that when this criterion is met, teachers become more self-directive and independent because their performance is being objectively evaluated by them, with the help of the supervisor, rather than the supervisor pointing out right and wrong behaviors.

Storlie (1967) also finds that teachers' intentions and their actual performance often do not match. He finds interaction analysis to be helpful to teachers as they try to improve their performance. Moskowitz (1967), who also has used interaction analysis in a study that focuses on the attitudinal and behavioral changes of student and cooperating teachers, finds that those teachers who are trained in interaction analysis engage in more indirect and, therefore, student-centered behaviors. Providing objective data on interactions in a classroom, e.g. through Flander's system, helps teachers develop "new insights into their teaching" and subsequently make "changes in their teaching patterns" (1967, p. 272). Zahn (1967) also finds similar results in a study he did investigating the changes in the attitude toward teaching of teachers in training when they are provided with objective interaction data and

encouraged to arrive at their own conclusions about the
data. He asserts that teachers in training who go through
this process develop more positive teaching attitudes than
those who go through traditional supervisory models.

Research Problem

Though all of the techniques mentioned in the
previous section were helpful in providing teachers with
feedback on what they were doing in the classroom, no
techniques existed that were aimed solely at providing
teachers with feedback on what they were doing in writing
conferences. The problem addressed in this study was the
development of a feedback system that would give teachers
information they could use in making decisions about their
behavior and performance in writing conferences.

Research Questions

1. Were there differences between a teacher's self-
   evaluation of what happens in writing conferences and
   what actually happened in two sets of conferences?
2. Were there differences in the content and interactions
   in a teacher's writing conferences after the teacher

received a tabulated printout detailing the content and interactions of earlier conferences?

3. Did teachers attribute any changes in their writing conferences to the feedback system?

Chapter II

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

I developed a self-evaluation technique that
allowed teachers to specify what was most important to them
in their writing conferences and to identify what they
thought actually occurred in their writing conferences. I
used a procedure where the interactions and content of
teachers' writing conferences were documented throughout a
series of conferences. The data generated from this
documentation was analyzed by a microcomputer program, "The
Real Time Observational Data Colletion (RTODC)"
(Cicciarella and Martinek, 1982), which generated
frequencies and percentages of interactions and content in
conferences that were meaningful to both the teacher
trainer and the teacher. Finally, I examined the
differences that occurred in the interactions and content
of initial writing conferences and those that were
conducted after the teacher received tabulated feedback.

Population

Graduate Teaching Assistants

The teachers for this study were graduate teaching

67

assistants (GTAs) in the English Department of a
southeastern university. The two GTAs I selected were both
under my supervision regarding their teaching. Both were
in their mid-thirties and were pursuing master's degrees in
English. The male had been out of college for over ten
years and during this time had engaged in a number of
occupations, most of them having to do with carpentry and
construction. During this time, however, he continued
actively to read literature and to write. Prior to
teaching one freshman composition class—the third quarter
in the freshman English sequence—during the spring quarter
of 1983, he had no teaching experience other than as a
student teacher during his undergraduate training. The
female had several years of experience teaching high school
English. She had also worked as a guidance counselor in a
private school. Like the male GTA, she also had taught one
section of freshman composition prior to this study.

I selected both of these GTAs for this study
because they were mature people, serious students, and
concerned, creative teachers. They both had experience
conducting conferences but had little training.

Students

The students in this study were selected from among

those students assigned to these two GTAs' classes. Both
GTAs taught one class of English 1121, the first quarter of
regular freshman composition. Students assigned to this
course had received adequate instruction in high school to
prepare them for college level writing. They were neither
remedial nor honor students. (For a more complete
description of the four entry level freshman composition
courses, see Appendix A.) Given the homogeneity of the
classes (SAT scores ranged from 400 to 579), I decided to
select the students from among both the better and weaker
students in the GTAs' classes, thus providing a
representative range of students in English 1121.

At the beginning of the fall quarter, each freshman
wrote a placement essay. These essays were read by members
of the English Department to confirm that students had been
placed in the correct freshman English course based on
their writing ability. After the placement essays were
written, I copied all of the placement essays from each
GTAs' class. Each GTA and I met and as a team sorted all
of the papers in their class into a high range and a low
range. From among these two ranges of papers, the GTA and
I attempted to select the four strongest papers, two
written by women and two written by men, and the four

weakest papers--again two written by men and two written by women. When we started to tape conferences, however, some of the students that we had selected either did not show up for the scheduled conference or refused to be taped, even though all of the students in each class had agreed to participate in the study. Where possible, we substituted from a list of alternate candidates we had developed, but such substitution was not always possible. As a result, the final group of students who were taped included some of those originally selected, some from the list of alternates, and some who were simply having conferences when we were taping. One of Linda's original eight students did not show up for the second conference, so in Linda's case, I had seven students for analysis.

Data Collection

GTA Self-Evaluation

After the students were selected for observation/taping and before the GTAs' conferences with these students were taped, I asked the GTAs to indicate and to evaluate what they thought they were doing in conferences and what they valued the most about such interactions. This self-evaluation had two parts:

completion of a self-evaluation form and participation in a

pre-taping interview. First, I asked the GTAs to respond

in writing to ten statements on a self-evaluation form (see

Appendix B). These statements were general, open-ended,

and purposely arranged in no particular order. My

intention was to provide statements that would initially

enable the GTAs to probe their feelings, attitudes, and

practices regarding conferences without too much prompting

from me. Because the questions frequently addressed the

same issues using different language, the GTAs' answers

revealed an elaborated picture of the their perceptions of

what they were doing in their conferences. Information

that I did not get from one answer I got from another.

When I received their completed form, I made a copy of it,

and returned the original to them.

Before they came in for their pre-taping interview,

I examined their responses on the written form and made

notations regarding those sections that were not clear to

me and wrote down some questions to ask them. When they

came in for the interview, we discussed each of their

responses. I encouraged them to comment freely on their

responses. My purpose during this interview was to insure

that I understood clearly what the GTAs thought about the

writing conferences they conducted. I taped these interviews and transcribed key portions of them as I prepared a summary of what happened during the interview.

Once the interviews were completed, I described the taping procedure to them; e.g., they were to start the tapes at the beginning of each conference whether or not anything was said. I then provided the GTAs with recorders and tapes, gave them a chance to practice using the machines, and wrote down the schedule of conferences with the students selected for this study. We then discussed the logistics of getting the completed conference tapes and copies of student papers discussed in these conferences to me.

Taping Conferences

I limited the taping of conferences to those involving a text, whatever point in its development, to maintain some control so that comparisons could be made between conferences. For example, if the initial taped conference with a particular student had been a prewriting conference, where only the generation of ideas was emphasized, and the second one had been a revision conference centering on a draft, it would have been difficult to make comparisons between the two conferences.

What might have been acceptable for a prewriting conference
might not have been appropriate for a revision conference
and vice versa.

Two sets of tapes were collected for this study.
The first set consisted of tapes recorded during the first
text-based conferences the GTAs had with the students. The
second set of tapes was gathered during the first text-
based conferences the GTAs had with the students following
the point at which the GTAs were given feedback on their
initial set of conferences. I also collected copies of the
papers discussed during each of the conferences. I wanted
these papers so that I would be able to analyze them in
relation to the actual tapes and the computer printouts
generated from the tapes. Having these papers allowed me
to determine to what extent the papers themselves
controlled the interactions and content of the conferences.

Providing Feedback to the GTAs

After coding (see Table 2 and Appendix C) and
analyzing (RTODC) the tapes of the GTAs conferences with
the selected students, I met with each GTA. This session
was taped for later analysis. First, I shared with the
GTAs the written summaries of what they had said during the
self-evaluation interview. The GTAs were encouraged to

comment as they saw fit on these summaries. When there were discrepancies, I made a notation and later went back to the tapes for verification. Before we went on to the next step, however, I made sure that the GTAs agreed that the summaries accurately documented what they thought about their conferences. Any changes in their perception of their performance that occurred between the self-evaluation interview and the first feedback interview were noted.

Next, I described how they were to read the computer printouts, the feedback system. They had as much time as they needed to study these printouts. I answered informational questions that they asked about the data on the printouts, but I made no value judgments about what was contained in the printouts.

Both of the GTAs in this study initiated discussions comparing their statements on the self-evaluations and the information revealed by the printouts. When they did not see particular discrepancies, I did not point them out. Clinical models (Goldhammer, 1969 and Flanigan, 1979) are effective in bringing about changes in teacher performance. Thus, had I helped the GTAs to see discrepancies between their self-evaluation and the computer printouts, then I could have expected to see some

differences in their subsequent conferences. One of the
purposes of this study, however, was to see if feedback,
given in the least directive manner possible, would make a
difference in subsequent conferences. Had I started
sharing my own observations, I would not have been able to
decide whether it was the feedback from the printouts or my
interventions that were causing some changes.

When the GTAs did see discrepancies, I asked them
the following questions: (1) How do you feel about these
discrepancies? (2) What are you going to do about them?
(3) Do you want to remove them? (4) Are they important?
When they asked me for advice, I took the words from their
questions and asked the GTAs the same questions they had
asked me. I did not share my personal preferences and
biases. I concluded these interviews when I felt that the
GTAs had begun seriously to consider what these printouts
were telling them.

After these interviews, I listened to the tapes and
summarized their contents. A description of these
interviews is contained in Chapter 3.

Documenting GTA Reactions to the Process

After the second group of conferences was taped and
analyzed, I again asked the GTAs to come in for an

interview where they examined the computer printouts obtained from the analysis of the second set of conferences. Again, I answered only informational questions and allowed them to draw their own conclusions. I did, however, encourage them to compare the new set of printouts with those from the first set of conferences.

I then offered the GTAs the opportunity to share their feelings about the effect of this particular evaluation process on their performance in conferences thus far. I encouraged them to explore to what extent the feedback system had helped them, hindered them, or been of little or no value. If their responses were general or vague, I asked additional follow-up questions to try to clarify just exactly what their perceptions were. Once the GTAs had been given an opportunity to share their feelings about the process, I asked them for suggestions on how it might be improved so it would be of more value to them.

I taped this entire session and then abstracted key portions of it. A description of what transpired during this second feedback interview is contained in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

Each of the tapes collected from the GTAs'

conferences were coded twice. The initial coding detailed
the interactions that took place between the students and
the GTAs. Research (Freedman, 1980, 1981, and 1982; Sims
as cited in Carnicelli, 1980) has shown that the
interactions that instructors perceive to be taking place
in conferences are not always the ones actually happening.
Thus, feedback on these discrepancies was crucial to the
GTAs if they were to gain greater insight into what was
occurring in their conferences.

The second coding identified the content of the
conferences. As with interactions, a teacher's perception
of the actual content of a conference may be clouded by
what he or she intends to emphasize as opposed to what
actually is discussed. For example, teachers may say that
they spend most of their time on larger issues in a
conference. If the content of their conferences, however,
was quantified in some fashion, they might find that they
spent more time on smaller issues than they thought.
Further, a teacher might intend to discuss larger issues,
but the student might change this focus. For example, the
teacher in Freedman's 1982 study wanted to discuss larger
issues in the writing process, but an Asian student kept
shifting the content of the conference to her feeling that

she was discriminated against by teachers. This shift in content caused by a student happens to most teachers occasionally. The teacher in Freedman's study would have probably been amazed by the amount of time that was actually spent discussing discrimination instead of writing. An accounting of the content that actually occurred in confrences was provided to the GTAs in this study so they could become consciously aware of how they were spending their time.

Description of Categories for Coding Conference Interactions

The categories of possible interactions in conferences selected for coding were taken from Flanders' well-established interaction analysis (Amidon and Flanders, 1967), designed to describe teacher-student interactions (see Appendix C). I used the first nine of the ten categories in Flanders' system verbatim (Amidon and Flanders: 1967, p.125). I developed my own tenth category and with slight modifications turned Flanders' tenth category into my eleventh category.

I defined Category 10 as the student or the teacher engaged in reading, either orally or silently, a portion or all of the text. Reading of the text was a special kind of

student/teacher talk that frequently takes place in a
conference. It does not involve an interaction in the same
sense as the other categories, which are more overt.
Reading of the text, however, frequently set the context
for more overt interactions. For this reason, it was
coded. For example, if a GTA or a student was spending ten
minutes of a twenty minute conference reading the text, the
GTA needed to be aware that a lot of time was being spent
on a rather inert kind of interaction as opposed to more
active interactions that allowed for give and take between
the students and the GTAs.

I redefined Flanders' tenth category
(silence/confusion), and it became my eleventh and final
category, which I coded as a 20. Flanders used his
silence/confusion category to account not only for those
moments when silence or "pregnant pauses" occur but also
for bits of interactions that the coder cannot code due to
confusion about the interaction. In a classroom situation
where the data is being coded as it happens, moments of
confusion on the part of the coder are likely. In this
study, however, where writing conferences were being taped
and could be replayed if necessary to clarify ambiguity,
the need for this category did not seem to be as great.

Silences of varying lengths, however, did occur where both the GTAs and the students were pondering the issue at hand. When silences of this nature occurred, they were coded as a continuation of the code used for the previous interaction. For example, if a student paused in response to a question asked by the teacher, this silence was coded as an 8. If a silence occurred, however, where it was obvious that either the teacher or the student or both were confused, then this silence was coded under my eleventh category as a 20.

Description of Content Coding Categories

In analyzing the content of writing conferences Freedman (1981) typically found the topics listed in Table 1 in varying proportions in the conferences she analyzed. In addition to these categories, she also said that topics often occurred in conferences that were idiosyncratic to the student and might or might not have anything to do with the writing. I changed Freedman's categories to account for the content I found in the conferences coded for this study (see Table 2). First, none of the conferences that I coded had any content transacted resembling an argument. Several times, however, either the teacher or the students did try to interpret a portion of a text, striving to understand clearly what the text was saying. I felt, as a

Table 1. Freedman's Content Coding Categories

Argument: a. interpretation of ideas
                  b. logic
                  c. clarity

Development: a. generate ideas
                  b. add ideas
                  c. delete ideas

Organization: a. order ideas
                  b. paragraph
                  c. transition between ideas
                  d. set up thesis statement, topic
                     sentences to mark organization
                     clearly

Sentence Style: a. join sentences
                  b. vary sentence structure
                  c. make sentence focus concrete

Mechanics: a. verb tense
                  b. reference
                  c. punctuation
                  d. spelling
                  e. capitalization

Revision

Transcription

Table 2. Content Coding Categories

Interpretation of text: Either the teacher, the student, or both the teacher and the student are attempting to understand something that has been written in the text.

Rhetorical Issues: Either the teacher, the student, or both the teacher and the student are discussing matters of development (generating ideas, adding ideas, or deleting ideas) or organization (ordering ideas and paragraphs, discussing transtions, or developing a thesis statement and appropriate supporting points).

Sentence Structure/Mechanics: Either the teacher, the student, or both the teacher and the student are discussing matters of sentence style (joining sentences, varying sentence structure, making sentence focus concrete) or mechanics (verb tense, reference, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization).

Process Strengths/Weaknesses (Clarifying Assignment/ Evaluation): Either the teacher, the student, or both the teacher and the student are discussing the ease or the difficulty with which the writing was created. Also, either the teacher, the student, or both the teacher and the student are discussing the nature of the assignment and any ambiguity in it. Also, the student might be wondering why the teacher is evaluating the writing in a certain way and the teacher might be explaining the reasons for such evaluation.

Extraneous Factors/ Preparatory Talk: Either the teacher, the student, or both the teacher and the student are discussing issues not relevant to the writing, e.g., the weather, whether or not class is going to be held, etc.

Content Uncodable: Any time the content is uncodable due to a problem with the tape or when the teacher or the student are reading the text.

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result, that renaming Freedman's Argument category
"Interpretation" gave a more accurate accounting of the
actual content discussed.

Second, in the process of trying to reach an
acceptable level of rater reliability, the other coders and
I found it difficult to differentiate between matters of
organization and development. We could, however, agree
that one of these two categories was being discussed.
Given this situation, we subsumed Freedman's organization
and development categories under the rubric of "Rhetorical
Concerns." From this point on, we were able to code the
tapes consistently. For essentially the same reason,
Freedman's Sentence Style and Mechanics categories were
combined under the heading "Sentence Structure/Mechanics."
Once this new category was established, the other raters
and I seldom disagreed about how to code content that
seemed to fall into this category. I used the word
structure instead of style because most of the sentence
level matters discussed had to do with the actual structure
of sentences. Sometimes these discussions were conducted
in relation to the style achieved by ordering a sentence in

a certain way. Other times, mechanical and grammatical problems were discussed from a formalistic rather than a stylistic perspective. Thus, the word structure seemed more appropriate. Also, since I limited the conferences that I taped to those that were text-based, all of the conferences in this study concerned revision. As a result, I saw no need to include Freedman's special revision category, so I eliminated it.

Freedman's final category, transcription, was too narrow in scope. Beyond problems with the physical act of putting words on paper, the stuudents in this study occasionally discussed the process they used to either arrive at certain ideas in a paper or to get a piece of writing down on paper. Seldom, however, did such discussions dominate the content of a conference. Occasionally the nature of the assignment, i.e., what the teacher was looking for, became an issue or topic of conversation in a conference. Related to this topic were discussions about the criteria the teacher used or was using to evaluate a paper. I felt that the frequency with which this topic occurred or did not occur was some measure

of how the teacher and the student perceived one another.
After all, no matter what audience was specified in a
paper, the teacher was the one who attached a grade to the
paper. When students were upset about a grade, as some of
Linda's students were, their behavior indicated either that
they did not clearly understand the teacher's evaluative
criteria or that their only stake in writing the paper was
a grade. I thought the GTAs should have this information.
Since discussions about the process of transcription, about
the assignment, and about evaluation did occur, though they
seldom dominated the conferences in this study, I lumped
all three of these factors together in one category.

Finally, I found, as Freedman did, that extraneous
topics not related to the writing frequently occurred in
the conferences in this study. Given this phenomenon, I
created a new category to account for it. I felt that the
GTAs needed to know the percentage of time they were
spending on topics not related to the writing. Also, since
I had already accounted for time spent reading papers in
the conferences during interaction coding, when I coded for
content, I included one content category labeled "Content

Uncodable" to account for the portion of time involving reading. I also infrequently used the "Content Uncodable" category to code portions of the tapes where the actual content of the interactions was impossible to discern. Sometimes, for example, I could tell that a question was being asked or answered, but I could not hear the complete content of the interaction, though I could get the essence of it. Background noise during taping or mumbled words were the usual causes.

Coder Reliability

A faculty member from the English Department and a doctoral candidate in English Education helped establish my reliability as a coder. We began by discussing the categories used to code the interactions in the conferences. After a discussion of the categories, we used several two-minute segments of conference tapes to practice the coding procedure. The tapes used for practice were not from conferences involving the GTAs and students in this study. This practice procedure was repeated until all of us were in relative agreement about what the categories meant and how they applied to what was heard on

the tapes. After these practice sessions and discussion,
we then coded a five-minute segment from a conference tape
recorded for this study. This same procedure was followed
to establish my reliability at coding the content.
Reliability was calculated using Scott's Pi Coefficient and
the procedure for calculating it outlined by Flanders
(1967, pp. 161-166). After six hours of training, I
achieved a coder reliability of .84 for coded interactions.
After an additional training session, I achieved a coder
reliability of .87 with one rater and .89 with the other
for content codes.

Interaction Coding Procedures

After I had gathered the tapes of the GTAs
conferences and before coding of each tape began, I played
each tape and listened to it for a few minutes to get a
sense of the nature of the interactions that were taking
place in the conference. When I felt comfortable with what
was happening, I started the tape from the beginning and
coded the interactions that were taking place at five-
second intervals. I was not so much concerned with the
five-second interval as I was with establishing a rhythm of

approximately twelve codings or entries per minute. This
rhythm was consistent with Flanders' recommendations
(Flanders, p. 162). If more than one interaction occurred
in a five-second interval, I recorded it only if it
indicated an actual shift in the interaction in the
conference. For example, if a student was answering a
question that a GTA had asked, I coded the interaction as
an 8. If while the student was answering, the GTA said a
word or two that indicated that a 3 should be recorded, I
did not record a 3 as long as the major thrust of the
interaction was on the student answering the GTA's
question. If, however, in the process of answering a GTA's
question, the student posed a question of his or her own,
this additional interaction was recorded because it
indicated a shift in the interaction in the conference.
Additional interactions within a five-second interval were
recorded to the right of the previous interaction for ease
of notation. When all of the interactions were tabulated,
however, the added interaction was counted as a separate
interaction, equal in weight to the one preceding and
following it.

In those instances where more than one category might apply to the interaction observed, I followed Flanders' suggestion that the interaction farthest from category five be recorded. He found that categories farther from the middle occurred less frequently. Therefore, following this rule improved the quality of the information gathered when there was a choice (Amidon and Flanders, p. 126). Flanders did cite an exception to this rule which I followed. He said that the silence category should never be used when there was a choice of another category (Amidon and Flanders, p. 128). The silence category was used only when there was an interval of five seconds of silence where it was clear that confusion existed between the participants in the conferences.

Content Coding Procedures

After the interaction coding was completed, the tapes were coded a second time for content. Essentially the same coding procedures used for the interaction coding were used for coding the content. Every five seconds, the appropriate category that described the content at that moment was recorded. Who was engaged in discussing the

content was also noted. For example, if the student was talking about a particular topic, it was coded using one number. If the teacher, however, was talking about the same topic, it was coded with another number (see Table 3).

Feedback System Analysis

I analyzed the data gathered from the coding of both sets of conference tapes using adaptations of a microcomputer software program developed by Cicciarella and Martinek (1982) called the "Real Time Observational Data Collection." This program provided printouts that were given to the GTAs (see Appendix D). The same program was used for both the interaction coding and the content coding of the tapes. Each set of data was analyzed separately so that a printout for the interactions and a printout for the content of each conference were generated for the GTA. These printouts gave the GTAs a table of the frequency of each interaction and each content topic in conferences with each student.

To answer the first research question concerning observed differences in the interactions and content of initial and subsequent conferences, I examined the

Table 3. Content Codes

Categories	Student	Teacher
Interpretation of Ideas	01	11
Rhetorical Concerns	02	12
Sentence Structure/Mechanics	03	13
Process Weaknesses/Strengths		
Clarification of Assignment/		
Evaluation	04	14
Extraneous Factors/		
Preparatory Talk	05	15
Content Uncodable	06	16

printouts from both sets of tapes to see if there were any differences or patterns of change between the first set and the second. The GTAs were a crucial source of information about whether or not this feedback system made a difference in their conference performance, the second research question. They were in the best position to know whether they had consciously attempted to change. During the interview following the taping and coding of the second set of tapes, I asked the GTAs to compare the printouts from the first set of tapes with those from the second and comment on any differences they found. I determined from their comments to what degree, if any, this printout feedback from the first set of conferences affected their performance in the second set of conferences.

To answer the third research question regarding differences in the GTAs perceived conference performance and their actual conference performance, I examined the self-evaluation form and the typed descriptive summary of the self-evaluation interview. I then compared what the GTAs said they thought happened in their conferences with the printouts from both sets of conferences that revealed

what actually happened. I looked for differences between
the self-evaluation and the printouts and asked the GTAs to
comment on these. Again, the GTAs were a valuable source
of information. The difference between the judgments they
made late in the process and the ones they made early
during the self-evaluation was that their later perceptions
were informed not only by their remembrance of what took
place in their conferences but also by what the printouts
quantitatively revealed to them.

In summary, this analysis includes quantitative
data gathered from the conference interaction and content
printouts. Descriptive data was gathered from taped
interviews with the GTAs at different points in the
feedback process.

Chapter III

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SELF-EVALUATIONS AND
WRITING CONFERENCES

In this chapter, I describe the data that I
gathered from the self-evaluation instrument, from the
self-evaluation interviews, and from both feedback
interviews with Larry and Linda, the GTAs in this study.
First, I describe the information that I gathered from
Larry and then proceed to a description of what I learned
from Linda. In Chapter 4, I will analyze this data in
relation to the three research questions.

Before I share this information, I want to review
the order in which it was collected. The GTAs completed a
self-evaluation instrument at the beginning of the study.
Their responses to this instrument became the basis for a
self-evaluation interview where I tried to clarify my
understanding of what they had written on the self-
evaluation instrument. At the beginning of the first
feedback interview, I gave the GTAs a typed summary of what
we had discussed during the self-evaluation interview. I
encouraged them to make any changes they wished. The rest
of the first feedback interview was spent examining the
printouts generated from the GTAs' first set of

conferences. The second feedback interview focused not only on the printouts from the second set of the GTAs' conferences but also on comparisons the GTAs could make between the printouts from both sets of conferences.

Self-Evaluation Interviews with Larry Bechtel

When I met with Larry to discuss the responses that he made on the self-evaluation form (see Appendix B), I taped the session and told him that my intent during this interview was to understand clearly what he had written down on the form. I encouraged him to comment as he saw fit. After these opening remarks, Larry and I began going through the form, point-by-point for the next half hour. When we were finished and Larry had left, I went through the notes I had taken during the interview and listened to the tape that I had made of it. I then developed a typed summary or abstracted version of what Larry had said about his performance in writing conferences.

After Larry had conducted his first set of conferences, we met for the first feedback interview. Though the major portion of time in this interview consisted of examining the interaction and content printouts generated from the tapes of his conferences that

I had coded, at the very beginning of the first feedback interview, I gave Larry a copy of the typed summary of what we had discussed during the self-evaluation interview. I asked him to read through it and to comment as he felt necessary. I also told him to tell me if there was any discrepancy in the typed summary or if anything had changed since we had held the self-evaluation interview. What follows is a synthesis of the two discussions that Larry and I had about his self-evaluation.

Item 1: The number of arranged and spontaneous conferences.

On the form, Larry reported that five percent of his conferences were spontaneous and ninety-five percent were arranged. Commenting on this ratio, Larry said that very few of his students requested conferences spontaneously, and he was not sure why so few took advantage of this possibility.

Item 2: The length of conferences.

Larry indicated on the form that his conferences typically lasted from twenty to thirty minutes. When he re-read this item, he said that he was not sure what the optimum time for conferences was but that the previous year he had taken my suggestion of about twenty minutes because

he had no prior experience. I asked Larry if he thought
twenty minutes was a reasonable time. He said that it was,
"if you get down to business immediately." He said that he
does feel the pressure of time when he is conducting
conferences. He can only deal with the one or two main
problems in the paper.

He said that last year he did have one conference
that lasted for an hour. Larry said that this student, a
girl, "hooked him into it." What he ended up doing was
rewriting the paper for the student. He said that he
should have shown her what to do instead, and then let her
rewrite the paper.

This year, to facilitate the efficiency and perhaps
the effectiveness of conferences, he was asking his
students to answer three questions before they come in to
see him in conference:

What troubled you about the paper?

What pleased you the most about the paper?

What's the best piece of advice you have for the
paper?

He felt that if each student answered these questions
before coming to a conference, both he and the student
would be able to focus their discussion better.

<u>Item 3</u>: Points in the writing process when conferences are held.

Last year, he had his students come to his office and he returned their papers in conferences. This year, he is having them come in for a conference with a rough draft that has already received input from peer groups. He also said that he was planning to have conferences after he had already graded papers and returned them. This way, he believed that students could come in and discuss possible revisions. He was giving them the option to revise their papers as an incentive for students to schedule conferences.

<u>Item 4</u>: Who or what receives primary attention in conferences.

On the form, Larry said that his conferences were basically teacher-centered and typically followed the sequence described below:

    a. The student would come in and hand me the paper to read.

    b. I would read the paper and note the significant faults.

    c. There would be some exchange between the student and myself.

<center>or</center>

    a. I would hand back the graded paper.

b. The student would read through my comments.

c. I would justify my comments.

d. Any questions?

Larry went on to report on the form that he planned to do things differently this year. As a result of the questions he had given the students to help them prepare for conferences, he hoped that he would be able "to jump in where they ask me to, or I'll point out things they've missed."

Item 5: Influences on approaches to conducting conferences.

Having no previous special knowledge about how conferences should be conducted, Larry initially relied on his own experience, which often caused his conferences to be hit or miss in nature. Since last year, he has been influenced, he reported, by watching me in revision conferences, by participating in the orientation for new faculty members and GTAs this year, and by reading an article by Escholtz in Eight Approaches. Larry did not clarify in what way these factors had affected him.

Item 6: Factors that determine goals for conferences.

According to the form, Larry's goals for conferences were determined by "a desire to see the

students improve their writing." To this end, Larry

planned to do the following thing in conferences:

    a. Try to concentrate on the single, most
        significant problem.

    b. Fault the writing without damaging egos.

    c. Offer criticism that expands the students'
        possibilities rather than confines their
        enthusiasm.

 Larry discussed the difficulty of giving constructive

criticism in a positive manner. He said that he did have

difficulty separating the writing from the writer, though

he tried to. Although he tried to focus on the writing,

sometimes the subject of a student's writing required him

to comment on the issue at hand, whether or not it was

relevant to the writing. For example, Larry said that he

had one student who wrote about her brother's cancerous

tumor. Sensitive to the student's feelings, Larry felt

compelled, however, to comment on the writing, which was

not very good. He chose to respond to both the situation

and the writing separately, i.e., "I know this situation is

rough for you" but "I've got to also talk about the

writing." Larry said that he was not sure how to handle

such situations. He said that when such dilemmas occurred,

he let the situation dictate his behavior. He said that

sometimes he wished he knew the writer better. Other

times, he wished that he did not know the writer so that he could "grade the writing and that's all."

Item 7: Conference sequence or structure.

The way Larry sequenced his conferences last year has already been described in Item 4 above. Larry did plan to change this sequence this quarter. He wanted "to go directly to the writing or try to anyhow." He wanted to start the conference by discussing issues that students had already posed in the questions he asked them to answer in preparation for the conference. He said that his students would have to tell him what the problems were in their papers, since he would not have already read the paper. Last year, he and his students started at the beginning of the student's papers and worked their way through to the end. He does not feel this method was very productive.

Item 8: What students should remember about conferences.

In response to this question, Larry wrote that he wanted his students to take "the firm sense that I wish to see their writing improve, that they can improve" away from his conferences. Commenting on his response, Larry said that he wants his students to feel that they can improve their writing: "I'm sure that they all can."

Item 9: Student evaluation of conferences.

Larry did not really know what his students thought about his conferences. He had never asked them. Larry did say that one male student had told him that he had been confused after having a conference with Larry, but he said that this student was looking to the teacher for the answer to problems in his paper.

In the conferences that Larry had following the self-evaluation interview, Larry asked his students how they felt about his conferences. He was pleased with what he found out: "This time around [meaning this quarter] the response is good." He then commented that students often did not comprehend points that he made in class until the same point was made regarding their own writing. "Then they see it." Larry said that conferences are an excellent place to accomplish this kind of pointing.

Item 10: Most and least productive features of conferences.

Larry did not answer this question on the self-evaluation form because he was not sure what was most or least productive in his conferences. When I probed about this missing response, he did say that it was valuable to be able to sit down one-on-one with students, but that

since he was always pressed for time, his good intentions
were not always realized. He was frequently forced to "do
a hasty job of it." He felt that his conferences last
quarter were not particularly productive since he was
conducting post-mortems, i.e., commenting on papers already
graded that would not be revised. He said that his
conferences this quarter were more productive than the ones
he had last spring because he was now looking at drafts
before students turned them in. Second, his students were
reviewing their writing more, in peer groups for example,
before coming to conferences. Third, he was also giving
his students the opportunity in class to comment on
problems they were having with their writing. Larry felt
that these three factors were making his conferences more
effective because his students were beginning to "develop a
habit of criticism." He believed this habit was making his
students "not so blind to their own faults" in conferences
and helping them to be "able to see [their problems]
themselves."

Near the end of our discussion of the self-
evaluation transcript during the first feedback interview,
Larry said that one of the most productive things he did in
conferences was "to look at the paper." He said, "I like

to actually see it. I think that it [a re-reading of the paper] helps the students too." He then went on to say that one of the most productive things that he was doing in conferences was to say what he thought and to encourage students to respond honestly to what he said to them. 'He said that he was now paying more attention to the students. He looks at them to see if he can tell from their expressions how they are reacting to what he is saying. For example, he referred to one student who revealed by her expression that she did not agree with what he was saying. When Larry noticed the displeasure in her face, he asked her, "What do not you agree with?" The student then told him. The student's response helped Larry, because he could then "clarify what [he] was saying, and she realized that [he] was right, that [his] criticism was apt afterall." Larry then said that he "will try to continue to be observant of the students and try to be sure that the things that [he says] to the student are getting through, and get them to respond honestly."

Feedback Interviews with Larry Bechtel

After Larry had taped conferences with the students selected for this study, I coded the tapes and generated

printouts detailing the interactions and content that
transpired in these conferences. During the first feedback
interview, Larry and I met to discuss the typed transcript
from the self-evaluation interview and the printouts
generated from the tapes of his first set of conferences
that I had coded. During the second feedback interview,
Larry and I discussed the printouts generated from his
second set of conferences and any differences he noticed
between this second set of printouts and the first set. I
encouraged Larry to comment at any time as he saw fit
during both interviews. As he talked, I maintained a non-
directive, non-judgmental stance throughout the interviews,
which lasted approximately two hours each.

The comments that Larry made about his self-
evaluation have already been discussed in the previous
section and I will now describe Larry's reactions to the
interaction and content printouts from both sets of his
conferences. Although we discussed the interaction and
content printouts separately in each interview, I am
synthesizing the comments that Larry made about each
student in both interviews regarding interactions and
content.

Kaplan

Commenting on the interactions in his first conference, Larry said, "I could see how the paper could be improved, so I told her. I didn't lead her on." As Larry made this statement, he was looking at the relatively large percentage of time that he had spent either giving information (24.4 percent) or giving directions (28.9 percent). He said that he did not take the time to lead her to the same conclusion that he had reached about her paper.

When he looked at the interaction printout from his second conference, he noticed that he had asked Kaplan more questions than he had in his first conference, from 3.7 percent to 20.2 percent. He noted that his information giving was about the same (approximately 24 percent), but that his direction giving was much less than before, down from 28.9 percent to 5.7 percent. Also, Kaplan had responded more in the second conference, from 14.5 percent to 33.2 percent. He said that he expected a little more silence this time because he was trying to wait for the students to initiate more of the talk in the conference.

When Larry looked at the content printout from Kaplan's first conference, he quickly recognized that most

of the content transacted in this conference had been his. He spent 14 percent of the time in the conference attempting to interpret the text and 36.2 percent of the time discussing rhetorical issues. The student dealt with only 14 percent of the total content transacted in this conference.

By the time that Larry had his second conference with Kaplan, he had managed to change the direction of the content transacted. Larry commented on the following changes between the first and second printouts:

Teacher Text Interpretation   14.0 to 0.4 percent
Teacher Rhetorical Concerns   36.2 to 39.3 percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns   9.0 to 22.0 percent

The amount of time he spent interpreting the text dropped as he gave more attention to rhetorical issues. Larry was most impressed and pleased with the student's increased attention to rhetorical concerns.

Howard

Larry's first comment about this student was that Howard "didn't have too much done on his" paper. Larry said that during this first conference he had Howard read his paper, and then Larry told him what to do. This particular student's paper was about the small town of Clifton, Virginia, but Howard had a lot of extraneous

material in his paper. Larry said he felt that this was a
successful conference because he and the student "rooted
around a little bit, and finally discovered that there was
one house in the town that [Howard] really liked, and that
[Howard] and his girlfriend like to go there and look at
the house and pretend that they were married and living
there . . . ." The student then shared that this house had
been put up for sale. Larry pointed out to Howard that his
dream could become a reality! "It was a perfect [idea for
a] paper." This student "went away very happy with the
idea of writing on that; it seemed that he was happy about
doing it."

Commenting on the interaction printout from the
first conference, Larry was pleased with what he saw:

Teacher Questions	11.2 percent
Information Giving	20.3 percent
Direction Giving	14.0 percent
Student Response	38.5 percent

Larry noticed that the student had responded at a
relatively high level, and he was pleased that the
percentage of time he had spent questioning, lecturing, and
giving directions was balanced by the percentage of time
the student spent responding to issues that Larry raised.
Even though Larry was pleased with these interactions, he
said that the student had not been able to accomplish what

they had discussed, receiving a D for the final grade.
Larry said that, even though the student had handled the
subject better, he still had not focused on the one house.

When Larry looked at the interaction printout from
the second conference with Howard, he was a little
discouraged that he had so few instances of encouraging and
praising students and accepting students' ideas. I
reassured him by saying that I only coded interactions in
these categories when there was an overt attempt to
encourage or praise. For example, "ah-hems" and "hums" in
response to a student statement were not coded as
encouraging or praising unless the interaction shifted from
the student to the teacher, indicating that teacher praise
or encouragement was dominating at that point. This seemed
to satisfy Larry. He then directed his attention to the
following shifts between the first and second interaction
printouts:

        Teacher Questions   11.2 to 8.7 percent
        Student Response   38.5 to 42.0 percent
        Student Initiated Response   1.3 to 18.0 percent

Larry was pleased that the student response had
increased even though he had asked fewer questions. Larry
was particularly happy with the increase in this student's
initiated response. He said that since the student had

spent more time responding, Larry had asked fewer questions because there was no need to ask more. Larry commented that this increase in student initiated response was what he wanted to happen in his conferences.

Looking at Howard's content printout from the first conference, Larry noticed that he and Howard had spent almost the entire time working on rhetorical concerns, 44.7 percent for Larry and 32 percent for the student. These percentages were accurate, as Larry remembered the conference progressing. He and the student spent their time on developing the student's idea. Larry said that Howard had not completed a draft of his paper before coming to this conference, which probably accounted for the emphasis on developing ideas.

Regarding the content coded on the second content printout, Larry noticed that the amount of time he spent on interpreting the text was down while the student's interpretation percentage increased from 5.7 percent to 14.4 percent. This student also initiated more discussion of rhetorical concerns, up from 31 percent to 43 percent. Nothing about these percentages seemed to concern Larry one way or the other, so we moved on to the next printout.

Carter

As Larry looked at the interaction printout from the first conference, he noticed that he had given this student a lot of information (31.2 percent) and directions (21.9 percent). Larry described Carter as being fiesty because in class he had tried to get Larry to change the grades on the papers because the grades were so low. Larry said that Carter was "the self-appointed lawyer for the class."

Commenting on this conference, Larry said, "I don't think I was really too successful, because [Carter's] paper didn't change a whole lot from the draft I saw" in conference. When I asked Larry what he thought prevented this student's paper from changing, Larry responded that he thought the student did not put too much work into revising the paper. Larry said that this student was strongly affected by Rohman's Meditation, i.e., he followed or used the steps in Rohman's as an organizational pattern for his paper. Larry speculated that this student's strong adherence to the pattern offered by Rohman's was a function of his being a basic writer; he did not have a strategy of his own to use.

The interaction printouts from the first and second

conferences revealed the following changes to Larry:

Acceptance of Student Ideas	zero	to	3.5 percent
Teacher Questions	2.5	to	6.5 percent
Information Giving	31.2	to	8.0 percent
Direction Giving	21.9	to	7.5 perent
Student Response	11.4	to	47.0 percent
Student Initiated Response	7.2	to	21.5 percent

Larry noticed that he did have some acceptance of the
student's ideas in the second conference. "I had zilch the
first time." He also noticed that he "had more questions,
three times as many," though the percentage was still low.
He was happy that his information giving and direction
giving had dropped, but he was startled by the increase in
student response, from 11.4 percent to 47 percent. When he
first saw the percentage, he exclaimed, "Holy mackeral!"
He was also pleased by the increase in this student's
initiated response which was three times as much, from 7.2
percent to 21.5 percent.

Larry said at this point in our discussion that he
was going to have to ask his students about the changes he
was seeing between the two sets of conferences. He did say
that he felt that the rewrites his students were doing,
which provided the focus for these conferences, "sparked a
lot of response from the students." The fact that these
papers had received a grade also made a difference in
Larry's estimation. It made the students "sit up and take

notice." They wanted to know what was wrong. The grade
"spurred them." He said that he thought his students took
their writing more seriously only in the sense that they
wanted a better grade.

When he turned his attention to the content
printout from the first conference, Larry noticed that the
content in Carter's conference centered on rhetorical
concerns, as it had in the other students' conferences.
This time, however, the emphasis on these concerns was
clearly coming from Larry. Larry spent 42.8 percent of the
time discussing rhetorical issues while the student only
spent 6.9 percent of the time discussing such issues. When
Larry shifted his attention to the content printout from
the second conference, he noticed the following changes:

Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	42.0 to 13.0	percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	8.0 to 31.0	percent
Student Text Interpretation	5.0 to 20.0	percent
Content Uncodable (Reading)	20.8 to 3.0	percent

I suggested that the shift in the attention to
rhetorical issues for both him and Carter was probably a
result of the shift in the interactions in the conference.
Larry agreed, but he also speculated that part of this
change was probably caused by his students' becoming aware
of what Larry was looking for and then starting to look for
these same things in their papers on their own. Also,

recognizing the increase in the percentage of time that Carter spent interpreting his text, Larry said that, when his students were explaining what they had written, they needed, instead, to be writing what they were explaining. In other words, Larry felt that Carter, for example, should be spending more time figuring out how to put his ideas down on paper clearly so that he would not have to spend time explaining what he had written to Larry.

Early

The following interactions caught Larry's attention on Early's first printout:

Information Giving	41.0 percent
Direction Giving	4.3 percent
Student Response	16.1 percent
Student Initiated Response	8.3 percent

After Larry noticed these numbers, he said that this student was one of the better writers in his class, getting the highest grade in the class. In the paper discussed in this conference, she wrote about an abandoned house located on the property where she lived that was forbidden to her. She focused on one day when she visited this house when her parents were not at home.

Larry said that the reason there were fewer directions given in this conference (4.3 percent) when

compared to some of his other conferences, was that in this
conference the student knew what she could do to improve
her paper. He did not spend a lot of time on smaller
issues because he was trying "to get her to put a little
more feeling" into the paper, as opposed to just strings of
description. He wanted her to talk more about how the
house appeared to her, the aura it communicated. He then
commented that Early used a lot of dialogues and used them
well. However, the student did not "get behind the
dialogue," supporting it with background and context. He
said that in her dialogues, "You don't know anything about
the people talking. You just have little snippets of
conversation . . . ." Larry went on to say that this
student tends to use her skill at writing dialogue as a
crutch, a way to dazzle the teacher and avoid really
wrestling with issues; "She tends to skim things off the
top, and she doesn't really plunge in at all." Larry did
say that this student was aware of this problem because she
had said in her journal that she tends to be more analytic
than emotional.

Larry noticed the following changes when he looked
at both of Early's interaction printouts:

Teacher Questions	2.2 to 7.2 percent
Information Giving	41.3 to 10.4 percent
Direction Giving	6.0 to 10.0 percent
Student Response	16.0 to 62.0 percent
Student Initiated Response	8.3 to 5.0 percent

Larry was a little concerned about the drop in student initiated response. I pointed out to him that as he asked more questions, almost four times as many, he also got about four times as much response from this student to which he replied, "I guess that figures."

When Larry looked at the content printout from the two conferences, he noticed the following changes:

Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	24.1 to 26.0 percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	13.2 to 60.1 percent
Teacher Text Interpretation	16.2 to zero percent

Larry was impressed by this student's increased attention to rhetorical concerns, which increased almost 45 percent in the second conference. Larry, commenting on this student's performance, said that her first essay was a good one, but that her second essay, the one discussed in the second conference, was hastily put together. Still, she continued to take an active part in class. Larry said that the cause for this student's inconsistent performance was an enigma to him.

Green

The following percentages on the interaction printout from Larry's first conference with Green caught his attention:

Information Giving	32.7 percent
Direction Giving	7.1 percent
Student Response	17.3 percent
Student Initiated Response	4.1 percent

After Larry examined these percentages, he said that "this student's big problem [was] anchoring things down." Larry said that Green talked a lot about feelings, but a reader could not relate the content of her feelings to anything concrete in her text. The paper Larry and Green discussed in this conference dealt with her room; however, "it was long into her paper before she got to her room, which was the point" of her paper. Larry tried to get her to focus on a Jimmy Dean poster she had in her room. He suggested that she focus on the feelings that this poster elicited for her. Larry said that in her final paper Green did do a good job of following his advice. She described the poster so that the reader could understand how it made her feel.

As he thought about this conference, Larry asked me if I had noticed any place while I was listening to the tape of this conference where he could have let Green do

more of the talking. Instead of answering his question, I
asked Larry if he remembered any such opportunity in the
conference. He remembered that he had talked to Green a
lot, which the printouts revealed, but she appeared to
understand what he was saying and to agree with him. He
did not remember any special time where he could have given
Green more freedom. Larry then made a comment about his
conferences in general. He said that he would be
interested to see the interactions in his next set of
conferences. Since he had given them so much advice in the
first set of conferences, he hoped that he would not have
to give this same advice to his students again.

When Larry looked at the interaction printout for
his second conference with Green, he noticed the following
changes:

Information Giving	32.7 to 12.8 percent
Direction Giving	7.1 to 8.5 percent
Student Response	17.3 to 46.0 percent
Student Initiated Response	4.1 to 13.2 percent

Larry was pleased by the increase in both student response
and student initiated response. He felt that the increase
in student initiated response meant that this student was
asking more questions which gave him the opportunity to
respond to the student in ways and with information that
was more meaningful for the student.

While he was looking through the content printout, he made no special comment about the percentages that he saw. When Larry looked at the content printout from his second conference with Green, he commented on the following shifts:

Teacher Text Interpretation	9.0 to 3.0	percent
Student Text Interpretation	4.0 to 17.0	percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	10.0 to 38.0	percent

Larry said that "It's good to see those categories [student rhetorical] go up." He then said that in this conference he had tried to help the student come to a position on whether or not she agreed with astrology. Larry observed that most of his conferences had taken place at this so-called higher level, "the level of organizing the ideas they've got" as opposed to getting transitions together and concentrating on surface features.

Griffin

Larry noticed from the interaction printout from the first conference that almost half of this conference consisted of student interaction (student response 24.8 percent and student reading 20.8 percent), though there was no student intiated response. Larry said that this student had thought that she had done so well, but he had "shot her down. She went out of the room dragging." He did say that

he had not been mean about what he told her about her paper. Griffin had described a small fishing town in Massachusetts, but she had described the whole town and not selected anything in particular. He tried to help her find something special in the town, "but I had a hard time doing it." He speculated that the time spent on trying to help the student discover this something special might have accounted for all of the student response. He tried to ask leading questions to force the student to elaborate upon her experiences in the town. Even though Larry could account for the interactions in the conference, he was concerned that Griffin had not initiated any of the interactions. He said, "I guess pretty much the flow is from me to her." He then looked back through the printouts again and saw that this telling pattern of his also occurred frequently in his first conferences with other students.

Regarding the interactions, Larry noticed the following changes from the first to second conferences:

Information Giving	19.3 to 8.0	percent
Direction Giving	14.2 to 8.5	percent
Student Response	28.0 to 32.0	percent
Student Initiated Response	zero to 32.0	percent

Larry was happy that the printout from the second conference indicated that Griffin had taken a more active

role in the conference. Both Larry and I agreed that the increase in student initiated response, from zero to 32 percent, was a more important change than perhaps the percentages suggested.

Regarding the content printout from the first conference, Larry commented on the following percentages:

Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	30.7	percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	22.4	percent
Teacher Sentence/Mechanics	zero	percent
Student Sentence/Mechanics	4.4	percent

Larry noticed that Griffin contributed quite a bit to the discussion of rhetorical issues in the conference and also brought up some sentence level concerns. Since Larry had no content coded at the sentence level, he apparently had shifted the student's attention to larger, rhetorical issues when she brought up sentence level issues.

Larry noticed the following changes in the content of his second conference with Griffin when compared to the first one:

Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	30.7	to	30.4	percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	22.4	to	37.7	percent
Student Text Interpretation	2.0	to	6.9	percent

Because Griffin was talking about the difference between different kinds of track competition, Larry observed that this student's writing behavior was different from that of his other students. This student thought things out in

writing. In the paper discussed in the second conference, Griffin started out thinking that a cross-country runner and a sprinter on a track team were much different. Through writing drafts of her paper, she was surprised "to find out that they were very much the same." Larry encouraged Griffin to continue to explore issues in writing this way.

Riley

While looking over the interaction printout, Larry commented that Riley, like Carter, was another relatively basic writer: "I had a most difficult time with him." I pointed out that approximately 50 percent of the conference consisted of Larry either making comments or giving directions. He replied, "Well, . . . for one thing [Riley] seemed to be asking for instructions on how to do [the paper]. He just wanted to do what I wanted him to do." This desire for Larry to take charge accounted for all of the comments and advice that Larry gave during the conference. He then looked back through the printouts, comparing his performance with Riley with the other students. Larry said that this student was at least "willing" to listen.

When Larry looked at the second conference

interaction printout, he noticed that there was not much change in the interactions between conferences for this student. Larry was upset that he was not making much headway with this student.

Regarding the content transacted in the first conference, Larry noticed that he and Riley had given a lot of attention to rhetorical issues. However, in the second conference, he observed the following shifts:

Teacher Text Interpretation	7.8 to zero	percent
Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	48.4 to 51.2	percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	16.8 to 20.8	percent

Larry said that Riley was more pleased with the paper he brought to the second conference than his first one, a paper that was, in fact, a little better but not as good as the student thought. Larry said, "I don't quite know how to jar a student loose like [this one]. He [came] in with a paper . . . and it [was] like it [was] laid up with mortar. How do you tumble down a wall like that?" Larry said that he knew that this student wanted him to say "Well, it looks fine, Tom. Go back and type it up." Larry then went on to say that this student misses the point so much that it is hard to know where to begin with him.

Parton

As Larry looked through the interaction printout

from his first conference with Parton, it became evident

that half of the conference consisted of student

interaction of some kind:

Student Response	34.2 percent
Student Initiated Response	12.1 percent
Student Reading	5.1 percent

Larry noticed that Parton had not spent as much time

reading the text as many of the others had. Larry said

that as he recalled, after this student had read a little,

she had a question about a problem she was not sure how to

handle. This question of hers probably accounted for the

increased amount of interaction on her part.

About this student Larry said, "She's very good.

She takes all of my advice very seriously." I commented

that if she was the kind of student who tended to follow

directions, she had a fair number of student initiated

responses when compared with other stuents. Larry agreed,

noting that this student was asking genuine questions and

looking for genuine answers.

On the second interaction printout, the biggest

shift in the interactions occurred in Parton's response

pattern:

Student Response	34.2 to 1.0 percent
Student Initiated Response	12.1 to 31.0 percent

As we looked at these percentages, I told Larry that I

sensed that the information he was giving was more to the
point, since the student was asking more questions. Larry
agreed.

Larry noted the following percentages on the
content printout of his first conference with Parton:

Teacher Text Interpretation	4.1 percent
Student Text Interpretation	15.4 percent
Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	33.8 percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	23.1 percent

Larry said that the numbers seemed accurate because Parton
had talked a lot during the conference. She also had
thought a lot about about her paper before coming in for
this conference.

Regarding the content of the second conference,
Larry noticed the following changes:

Student Text Interpretation	15.4 to 6.6 percent
Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	33.8 to 33.3 percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	23.1 to 34.5 percent
Student Sentence/Mechanical	zero to 7.4 percent

Larry said that this student was very conscientious: "She
works hard. She's mechanical about it though, so she's
very concerned with how the sentences work. The idea of
shaping the prose is quite beyond her." He commented that
the concept of moving large passages of a piece of writing
around in a draft to achieve a particular rhetorical aim is
a difficult concept for students to grasp.

Self-Evaluation Interviews with Linda Deeb

As with Larry, I met with Linda in my office to go over the responses that she had recorded on the self-evaluation form that I had given her. I encouraged her to elaborate at any point as I tried to clarify what she had said on the form. I reminded her that I was not making value judgments and that my intention was only to clarify what she had written.

At the beginning of the first feedback interview, I gave Linda a copy of the typed summary of what we discussed during the self-evaluation interview. I asked her to read through it and to comment as she saw fit. I also told her to tell me if there was any discrepancy in the typed summary or if anything had changed since we had held the self-evaluation interview. The comments that Linda made on these two occasions about her self-evaluation have been combined in the following discussion.

Item 1: The number of arranged and spontaneous conferences.

On the self-evaluation form, Linda said that 33 percent of her conferences were spontaneous and 67 percent were arranged. She told me also that, because the teacher

who was in her classroom before her frequently kept her
class beyond the assigned time, she was able to hold brief
one-minute or two-minute conferences with her students
before class. These informal, ad hoc conferences usually
consist of a student question, factual in nature, which she
can answer quickly. The subject of these conferences
usually focused on the nature of an assignment or the
mechanics of classroom management. She also conducted
brief conferences after class when possible.

Item 2: The length of conferences.

Linda had indicated on her self-evaluation form
that her conferences usually lasted twenty minutes but that
spontaneous conferences usually lasted from two to five
minutes and often led to the scheduling of a longer
conference. There was usually one of these spontaneous
conferences during every class. Linda commented that these
students were "beginning freshman and unsure" of
themselves, fearful that they would do something wrong.

During the first feedback interview, Linda reported
that she was having a hard time keeping her conferences to
twenty minutes. She said that many of her formal
conferences were taking half an hour. Linda said that, if
she could have her way, she would have conferences that

lasted an hour. This amount of time would allow her to finish all that she wanted to accomplish in conferences.

At this point, she elaborated that she had given her students her home phone number and that she had conducted many conferences over the phone. Thus far, she has had between three and four of these telephone conferences per week lasting from five to twenty-five minutes. She mentioned that one student who cried in his first office conference with her had this kind of conference with her. Another of her students, one who had been rather shy and retiring in both class and conferences has had several telephone conferences. She said that several students seemed to feel freer to discuss issues and to be more confident over the phone. In the formal conferences, students seem to be more uncertain, more unsure.

Item 3: Points in the writing process when conferences are held.

Linda indicated that she usually had arranged, as opposed to spontaneous, conferences with her students during prewriting and when they submitted revisions to her. In further discussion, I determined that her prewriting conferences usually focus on topic selection and possible

development of the topic. She said that her students at
this stage in the process usually need some help getting
started. After the student has selected a topic, he or she
frequently needs to be able to find a way "to relate the
topic to their specific interests." At the time of our
discussion, she had had only one conference of this kind.
A student who was very conscientious came in to see her to
confirm that he was headed in the right direction.

Her revision conferences usually came after the
students had completed three drafts, a rough draft brought
to class for peer revision, a second draft submitted to
her, and finally a revised third draft. Her rationale is
that after students have received the paper they submitted
to her they are in a position to think about the draft and
have questions ready to ask her in a conference. In such a
conference, she tries to first answer their questions.
Then she directs them to features of their writing that may
have a long-term effect either on future writing they do
for her class or for future writing assignments in other
classes. She then discusses short-term issues that deal
with a possible revision of the paper under discussion. To
use her expression, "We first deal with the paper in front
of us and then move outward" to larger concerns. She said,

however, that she cannot accomplish this in every
conference every time.

Item 4:   Who or what receives primary attention in
          conferences.

In response to this statement, Linda said that her
conferences were student-centered, teacher-centered, or
student-writing project centered depending on the needs of
the student. Linda defined student-centered conferences as
those where an emotional problem was interfering with the
student's writing. When this happened, she tried to deal
with the emotional problem before going on to the writing.
She said that she often gets a sense that the student may
be having some emotional problems from what they write in
their journals, from the sometimes chaotic state of the
writing in their more formal class assignments, or from
their depressed behavior in class. Linda contended that
such issues need to be dealt with first before both she and
the student can focus on the writing. In deciding when to
engage in this kind of conference, she tried to "walk a
line between being mother hen and being cold and
calloused."

Linda believed that she rarely holds teacher-
centered conferences. When they do occur, they usually

focus on information that the student has missed in class.

Occasionally, however, some students just need to be

directed or bluntly told where they stand. Even when this

happens, she said she switches back and forth between being

directive and letting the student take more control.

At this point in our discussion, I asked her what

she meant by the statement, "and, by inference, to think

more effectively" that she had included on the attachment

to the self-evaluation form. Linda explained that she

believes that students cannot write well if they cannot

think. Therefore, she tries to point out strategies for

them in conferences that will show them how to think. For

example, she said that when students were making general

statements, she pointed out the need for specifics. Or

when the students were engaged in persuasion, she might

talk about the different kinds of logic. When I questioned

her further on this point, she said that the main problem

students had was being "fuzzy." To alleviate this problem,

and others, she tries to show them what they are doing

wrong so they can then improve. She also, however, tries

to show them how and why portions of their writing has

succeeded. Her main goal is to help her students "feel

comfortable with the fact they can be writers . . . to

accept themselves as writers."

Item 5: Influences on approaches to conducting
conferences.

Her experience working as a counselor has perhaps
made her more student-centered than other writing
instructors might be. She has also been influenced by some
of Peter Elbow's thinking (Writing with Power) and by some
other articles she had read. She has also been influenced
by listening to what her colleagues are doing.

Item 6: Factors that determine goals for conferences.

She wrote on the form that her goals for
conferences are largely determined by the student and sees
a conference as a joint venture. She clarified her
reference to implied needs as the emotional needs of her
students. In other words, she deals with the emotional
needs of her students and also their stated needs, which
may or may not be emotional, e.g., "I want to know how to
write satire" as opposed to "I'm so depressed that I'm
going to quit school."

Item 7: Conference sequence or structure

Linda had written that she tries to structure her
conferences in the following way:

a. Greet student and settle them.
b. Ask [the student] to glance over the writing involved.
c. Indicate areas of promise or interest.
d. Indicate areas of problems.
e. Ask [the student] to explain possible solutions or steps she could take.
f. Ask [the student] for questions or comments.
g. Make new appointment if needed.
h. Visit with remaining time if student wishes or needs to.

She indicated that the short time limit of conferences keeps her from always accomplishing these goals. Although all conferences do not sequence themselves in this way, she tries to follow this agenda to prevent being led astray. As it is now, she practically has to push her students out the door. She said that sometimes emotional needs get in the way of writing and subverts this agenda. She said that she tries to start with something positive before moving on to more negative matters.

Item 8: What students should remember about conferences.

On the form, Linda said that she wanted her students to gain "confidence in their ability to write" as a result of her conferences. She said, "If I teach nothing else, I want to teach them that they can write and that it's fun to write. If they can do that, they can cope with any writing assignment."

Item 9:   Student evaluation of conferences.

Linda believed that her students find her
conferences helpful although she had not asked her
students. She said that they must make some difference
because she sees improvement in their writing. When 1
asked her what she meant by improvement, she said that
students tended to make or actually carry out the changes
that had been discussed in conferences. She also said that
their later essays were better than the earlier ones.

As we discussed the self-evaluation transcript
during the first feedback interview, Linda said that she
had been concerned after the the self-evaluation interview
that she had no information from her students about how
they felt about their conferences with her. As a result,
she had asked her students, after her first set of
conferences with them, to evaluate both her conferences and
their experience in peer groups on a scale of one to ten,
ten being very helpful and one being not very helpful. She
said that the average response was a nine. The lowest
response was a five. I then asked her if her students made
any specific comments. She said that she remembered that
one student had said something to the effect: "Until I
went in for conferences, I knew I was making mistakes, but

I didn't understand why I was making them and how I could stop making them."

I then asked her about the student who had given her a five. Linda said this student reported that the conferences were "so rushed," that after they were over, "he wasn't sure what had been discussed." Because Linda's first conferences were thirty to thirty-five minutes, I asked her how this student perceived conferences. She said that he wanted her to revise the paper for him: "I think he's lazy." Actually, Linda said that this student wanted an A for the course but was unsure of himself. Because of his uncertainty, he looked to Linda for specific directions or "the answer." She then went on to say that even though students like this one were difficult to work with, "I wouldn't be happy with myself if I didn't keep on trying."

Item 10: Most and least productive features of
conferences.

In response to the last item on the form, Linda said that "student/writing object/centered and structured conferences" were more productive than "teacher-centered conferences." Her rationale for making this statement was that if she did not have an agenda that she could easily be led astray and not accomplish what needs to be done.

Linda confirmed the observation that she had made during the self-evaluation interview about teacher-centered conferences: "The conferences that I hear that are teacher-centered, the students are not going to consider them as valuable as the ones that [directly address issues important to students.] It's their writing, and until we address it as their writing, if we take charge and say you should do this, this, this, and this, then it's no longer their writing, it's our writing."

In commenting on the entire typed summary, Linda said that it was accurate but also a little idealistic: "What I said is what I want to happen . . . . It doesn't always happen."

First Feedback Interview with Linda Deeb

I met with Linda to discuss the self-evaluation interview and to provide her with the printouts generated from tapes of her first set of conferences. A second feedback interview to review both sets of printouts followed the second conference. I encouraged her to comment as she saw fit at any time and maintained a non-directive, non-judgmental stance throughout the interview. Although Linda often asked me for advice, I resisted by

turning her questions into ones directed back towards her. Linda's comments about her self-evaluation have already been discussed in the preceding section, this section describes Linda's reactions to the interaction and content printouts from both sets of her conferences.

As I had done for Larry, I first explained to Linda how to interpret the various interaction and content categories. I told her to view the numbers against her remembrance of what transpired in the conference. Though the interaction and content printouts were discussed separately, I have combined the discussion of both sets of printouts as they apply to each student.

Brewer

This student was very quiet in class. In the conference Linda had a hard time getting Brewer to interact at all; she was very passive and seemed intimidated. As Linda looked at the first conference printout, she was concerned that she had dominated from 55 to 60 percent of the time because the student interaction categories were so low:

    Student Response   20.4 percent
    Student Initiated Response   3.3 percent

There was a lot of silence in this conference (9.7 percent)

because Linda was waiting for the student to respond.
Linda observed that perhaps she had wasted a lot of time.
I allowed her to talk about this issue of silence for a
while, and she came to the conclusion that silence was
often constructive.

When Linda examined the interaction printout from
her second conference with Brewer, she immediately said
that she was "having sort of a hard time getting on a
personal basis with with [this student]." Linda said that
she was not sure what Brewer wanted from her, and as a
result, Linda was not sure how to respond to her: "I tend
to be more business-like with this student, and I'm not
sure why." In face-to-face situations, whether in
conference or class, Linda said that this student tends to
back off. When Linda had a conference with this student
over the phone, Brewer seemed to be very relaxed.

When Linda examined the interaction printout from
her second conference with Brewer, she noticed the
following changes:

Teacher Questions	12.3 to 11.7	percent
Information Giving	20.8 to 17.3	percent
Direction Giving	25.3 to 23.9	percent
Teacher Reading	3.2 to 12.2	percent
Student Initiated Response	3.3 to 1.4	percent
Silence	9.7 to 16.9	percent

Linda said that she felt compelled to take a more active

role in the conferences that she had with Brewer. She
hesitated "to put the student on the spot." After Linda
saw the percentages for the amount of silence and student
initiated response, however, she decided that she wanted
Brewer to become more involved in conferences with her: "I
feel that she manipulates me to a certain extent. I feel
like I'm forced into saying something. I'm just going to
have to play a waiting game."

Regarding the content transacted in the first
conference, Linda commented on the following percentages:

Teacher Sentence/Mechanics	36.2 percent	
Teacher Extraneous Talk	18.5 percent	
Student Extraneous Talk	7.3 percent	

She said that, because she had spent time discussing
mechanics in this first conference, Brewer's next paper had
fewer mechanical errors. Linda also explained that the
amount of extraneous talk in this first conference was
caused by her attempt to make the student feel comfortable.

Regarding the content transacted in Brewer's second
conference, Linda commented on the following changes in
percentages:

Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	5.8	to	16.7 percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	0.8	to	5.0 percent
Teacher Sentence/Mechanics	36.2	to	6.6 percent
Student Sentence/Mechanics	11.5	to	5.0 percent
Teacher Extraneous Talk	18.5	to	21.2 percent

Both Linda and Brewer increased the percentage of time they spent discussing rhetorical issues and decreased the percentage of time they gave to sentence level or mechanical issues. Linda, however, still appeared to be leading the conference with the student passively following along.

Linda was surprised by the amount of extraneous content discussed in these conferences. She had a lot of extraneous talk in the first conference, but she had even more in the second one. Linda did not remember that there had been so much extraneous conversation. Since she felt defensive with Brewer, Linda speculated that she may have engaged in too much extraneous chatter in an attempt to please this student.

Eaves

Linda said that this student's paper had some strengths in it, but these strengths were not coming through. As they talked in conference, Linda said that Eaves "wasn't understanding what I was getting at, so I had to paraphrase it." The printout confirmed this claim:

Teacher Questions	17.7 percent
Information Giving	17.3 percent
Direction Giving	21.0 percent
Student Response	24.7 percent

The student's role in this conference consisted primarily of responding to issues raised by Linda. Linda also said that Eaves was a very quiet person, more at ease in conferences than in class. In class, Linda observed she felt Eaves was "on the edge of her chair" due to tension. Linda was surprised that Eaves interacted as much as she did.

Linda examined the following interaction shifts in her second conference with Eaves:

Teacher Questions	17.7 to 10.0 percent
Information Giving	17.3 to 35.6 percent
Direction Giving	21.0 to 14.9 percent
Student Response	24.7 to 13.3 percent
Student Initiated Response	4.1 to 12.0 percent

Linda commented that the student was really upset about a grade and that perhaps the increase in the percentage of student questions was caused by the student's desire to find out why she had not done better. Linda then observed that Eaves probably had more control over the direction of this conference than Linda had. Eaves was determined to get answers to her questions. Linda said that Eaves was "very earnest and [took] everything too seriously. You can't joke her out of a bad mood."

Comparing the content transacted in her first and second conferences with Eaves, Linda noticed the following

changes:

Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	30.8 to 21.3	percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	17.9 to 10.0	percent
Teacher Text Interpretation	zero to 10.5	percent
Student Text Interpretation	zero to 9.6	percent
Teacher Sentence/Mechanics	9.2 to 25.1	percent
Student Sentence/Mechanics	6.3 to 2.5	percent

She was pleased that the content transacted between Eaves and her seemed to be more balanced, which was what she wanted. Eaves, according to Linda, did not have that many mechanical concerns, so neither she nor the student spent much time on such issues. Linda said that during the second conference both she and the student spent less time discussing rhetorical issues and more time interpeting the text because Eaves was concerned about her grade. Linda speculated that the reason why she spent 25 percent of the total conference time on mechanics was that she was trying to justify the grade to the student.

Stone

Linda said that this student was a very intense, serious person. Because Stone took things so seriously, Linda said that she had to be careful that she was not being "flippant or nonchalant," for fear of wounding the student.

The interaction printout from Linda's second

conference with Stone revealed the following changes:

Teacher Questions	20.5 to 13.0 percent
Information Giving	23.0 to 44.6 percent
Direction Giving	11.0 to 16.0 percent
Student Response	35.6 to 16.1 percent
Student Initiated Response	2.0 to 13.0 percent

Linda noticed that during the first conference Stone spent almost 40 percent of the conference time responding to issues raised by Linda. Linda was pleased that in the second conference the decrease in student response was accounted for by a concurrent increase in student initiated response. Linda said that the principal reason that Stone had initiated more discussion in the conference was that Stone wanted to make sure that she had the revision of her paper "headed in the right direction," and, therefore, improve her grade.

The predominant focus of the content of the first conference was on rhetorical concerns (Linda 26.3 percent/student 29.1 percent). When Linda looked at the content printout from the second conference, she noticed that Stone devoted less attention to rhetorical concerns, from 29.1 to 18.0 percent, because she was concerned about doing her paper correctly. This decrease in student discussion of rhetorical issues seemed to contradict Stone's desire to improve her paper. No contradiction

existed, however, because Linda remembered that she had spent a lot of time telling Stone what she needed to do to strengthen her paper. The increase in the percentage of time that Linda spent giving information, from 23.0 to 44.6 percent, substantiated Linda's explanation. Linda also noticed that she gave more attention to mechanical concerns in this conference than she did in the first one, from 13.3 to 19.1 percent. Linda then made the following important observation: "I think that when I'm put on the defensive [telling students what they must do to improve a grade], I jump on the mechanics." Linda's remembrance of this conference was that it focused more on rhetorical issues than it did. Linda said that this tendency of hers was "something [she needed] to watch out for."

Jenkins

Linda was surprised by what she found in the interaction printout from her first conference with Jenkins:

Teacher Questions	17.5 percent
Information Giving	20.1 percent
Direction Giving	13.9 percent
Student Response	42.3 percent
Student Initiated Response	0.4 percent

Linda thought that Jenkins had initiated more response than

he had. Linda wanted him to make his paper more personal. As it was, the paper was too general.

Linda was troubled that Jenkins had so much response and not enough initiation. Further, she said that his second paper had the same kind of problems that she had found in his first paper. Linda was concerned that Jenkins had not transferred what he had learned from the first paper to the second. During her conferences with him, Linda said that, when she mentioned something, Jenkins seemed to know how to apply it.

Linda noticed the following changes between the first and second interaction printouts:

Information Giving	20.1 to 22.8	percent
Direction Giving	13.9 to 8.7	percent
Student Initiated Response	0.4 to 9.7	percent

Linda said that she anticipated these changes because she was asking her students to write out questions that they wanted to ask her before they came in for conferences. She said, "I'm asking them to take responsibility for their conferences." I told her at this point that my remembrance was that most of the students whom we taped did not have specific questions written down. She then admitted that several of them had not. However, Linda believed that, since her students had already met

with her at least once in a conference, they appeared to
feel freer about asking questions in their subsequent
conferences with her. She was troubled that in this second
conference with Jenkins her information giving was still
occupying too much of the conference time.

Commenting on the content transacted in her first
conference with Jenkins, Linda observed that there was a
lot of time spent on process strengths and weaknesses when
compared to the small amount of time she devoted to this
topic with other students:

Teacher Process/Evaluation   7.2 percent
Student Process/Evaluation   7.9 percent

Linda said that Jenkins told her he had answered the
questions on the assignment and questioned why he had not
received a better grade. To answer Jenkins' question,
Linda spent some time with him talking about what would
make a good sound paper. I commented that her explanation
was consistent with what the printout revealed because
there was a relatively even balance between the percentage
of time both Linda and Jenkins devoted to discussing
process strengths and weaknesses.

Concerning the content transacted in her second
conference with Jenkins, Linda noted the following shifts
from the first conference:

Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	23.4 to 29.8	percent
Teacher Sentence/Mechanical	18.6 to 9.4	percent
Teacher Extraneous Talk	5.2 to 5.5	percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	15.8 to 26.0	percent
Student Sentence/Mechanical	15.8 to 8.1	percent

Linda said that there were not many mechanical errors on Jenkins' second paper, so there was little need to comment on sentence level or mechanical concerns. Linda explained that one of the reasons for the decrease in mechanical errors in her students' second papers was the influence of peer editing in her class. Also, Linda said that she was consciously trying to deemphasize a concern for mechanics in the second set of conferences and to deal more with the ideas and larger rhetorical issues in her students' papers. I then pointed out to Linda that a total of 55 percent of her second conference with Jenkins was spent on rhetorical concerns, an increase of 15 percent from the first conference. Linda said, "That's what I'm trying to aim for."

Miller

Linda specifically commented on the following percentages on Miller's first interaction printout:

Teacher Questions	13.0 percent
Information Giving	31.4 percent
Direction Giving	16.5 percent
Student Response	32.6 percent

Student Initiated Response   3.8 percent

Her initial comment was that she did not realize that she had engaged in so much information giving in this conference. In fact, Linda dominated approximately 60 percent of the interactions in this conference. She noted that, though the student had responded 32 percent of the time, apparently the nature of his response was in relation to issues raised by her. She said that she was giving Miller suggestions on specific details that he could include in his paper, but she did not realize that she was doing so much "directing."

Linda remembered that the student had done more telling than she had done. She did say, however, that she was not questioning my figures, but she was questioning her own memory of the conference. She was very concerned that it looked like she was just sitting in the conference, telling Miller what to do.

Linda noticed the following differences in Miller's second interaction printout:

Teacher Questions	13.0 to 20.3 percent
Information Giving	31.4 to 27.2 percent
Direction Giving	16.5 to 7.2 percent
Student Response	32.6 to 31.2 percent
Student Initiated Response	3.8 to 9.4 percent
Silence	zero to 4.0 percent

Linda said that her questions were aimed at trying to

understand what Miller was trying to do. Linda said that Miller was doing well in her class and that his revisions were showing improvement. She also reported that Miller took some initiative in the second conference and was becoming more daring in his writing: "He'll try something even if he's not sure it will work." Turning her attention to the silence category, Linda said that she felt a little defensive about any silence in her conferences, even though she felt that such silence was positive most of the time. I told her that the presence of silence should not necessarily be interpreted as a negative factor.

Linda focused her attention on the following percentages on Miller's first content printout:

Teacher Process/Evaluation	35.3 percent
Student Process/Evaluation	22.9 percent

Linda said that the content of the first conference was affected by Miller's concern about his grade. Comparing the content on Miller's second content printout with the first, Linda examined the following percentages with interest:

Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	15.4 to 53.4 percent
Teacher Sentence/Mechanical	4.5 to zero percent
Teacher Process/Evaluation	35.3 to 1.8 percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	6.8 to 39.5 percent
Student Sentence/Mechanical	1.5 to zero percent

Linda noticed immediately that there was no discussion of

mechanical concerns in the second conference. Linda said
that she believed one of the reasons for the major shift in
the content of this conference was that both she and Miller
knew more clearly what she considered to be important in
student writing. She tried to emphasize rhetorical issues,
and with this in mind, Linda said that she spent a lot of
time in this conference trying to help Miller add "telling"
details to his paper and to make his central character more
three dimensional and believable. She was surprised,
however, that she did not even mention mechanics in the
second conference.

Gray

Linda commented on the following percentages on
Gray's first interaction printout:

Teacher Questions	13.2 percent
Information Giving	32.1 percent
Direction Giving	11.8 percent
Student Response	30.3 percent
Silence	5.2 percent

This printout was very interesting to Linda because the
student had cried during the conference. In fact, the
first word that Linda used to describe this conference was
painful. Linda was surprised by what this printout
revealed. The percentage of time that Linda devoted to
questioning, giving information, and giving directions was

similar to the amount of time that she had spent on these

issues in other conferences. She assumed that the

percentages would be radically different. For example, she

thought that there was much more silence than there really

was. Also, Linda's remembrance was that the student said

very little in the conference, when actually he did respond

to issues that Linda raised 30.3 percent of the time.

Before seeing these percentages, Linda said that she felt

that the student had not really been involved in the

conference when, in fact, he had been.

Linda commented that both she and Gray were more

comfortable in the second conference than they had been in

the first one where he cried. She said that there were not

as many negative student feelings getting in the way of

this conference. In particular, Linda noticed the

following percentage changes on the second interaction

printout:

Teacher Questions	13.2 to 18.1 percent
Information Giving	32.1 to 27.8 percent
Direction Giving	11.8 to 6.3 percent
Student Response	30.3 to 34.7 percent
Student Initiated Response	2.4 to 5.5 percent

Linda was pleased that the student initiated response had

doubled. Though the percentage was still small, she said,

"It's a beginning. It's more than I expected." She again

reiterated that this conference was so much more

comfortable than the first.

When Linda looked at the content printout from the

first conference, she commented on the following

percentages:

Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	27.6 percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	11.4 percent
Teacher Process/Evaluation	18.0 percent
Student Process/Evaluation	13.6 percent

Linda was amazed that she and Gray had focused on

rhetorical issues as much as they had. Linda thought they

had spent more time discussing the grade. Actually, she

spent 18 percent of the time discussing such issues while

the student spent 13.6 percent of the conference time

discussing his grade. She was not so sure that given the

painful circumstances for the student that rhetorical

issues were what she should have been addressing. She

thought, perhaps, that she should have spent more time

addressing Gray's emotional needs.

When Linda looked at the content printout from

Gray's second conference, she commented on the following

differences:

Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	27.6 to 40.4 percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	11.4 to 26.5 percent
Teacher Sentence/Mechanics	6.3 to 5.3 percent
Student Sentence/Mechanics	2.9 to 6.1 percent

Linda was pleased that the percentage of time that she and Gray devoted to rhetorical concerns had doubled. She said that Gray was doing a lot better job of proofreading his more recent papers. Nothing in the percentages, however, indicated that proofreading or surface errors had ever been discussed in any depth in these conferences. Linda had previously observed that, when she feels she must defend a grade, she tends to focus on the mechanical errors in a student's paper. Since Gray had been upset about his grade, Linda somehow equated his concern as a problem with proofreading or mechanics. In fact, the problems with Gray's papers had little or nothing to do with mechanics. Generally, he failed to recognize the needs of his audience and to develop his papers sufficiently to meet their needs.

Doyle

Linda said that this student was "really coming out of his shell." She remembered that Doyle had been very shy and quiet in this conference. She had to "draw him out" a lot. I pointed out that he was responding 31 percent of the time. Linda, however, was concerned that there was less than one percent student initiated response. I then asked Linda to look back through the amount of student initiated response in all of her conferences. There was

not a great deal in any of her first set of conferences, but the percentage of time that this student devoted to initiating response was below what other students had done. Linda then resolved that she was going to make Doyle and all of her students "do more of the digging themselves."

Linda noticed the following differences in Doyle's second interaction printout:

Teacher Questions	15.3 to 14.5 percent
Information Giving	21.0 to 23.6 percent
Direction Giving	17.6 to 7.3 percent
Student Response	31.3 to 51.8 percent
Student Initiated Response	0.4 to 0.9 percent

Commenting on the lack of student initiated response, Linda said that Doyle "expects me to be in charge, to be the teacher, and I dang well better be." Linda reacted to his desires by allowing Doyle this power because otherwise there would not have been much interaction. She was more directive with him: "He's a defined person. He knows who he is and is comfortable with that." In other words, he knows that he is the student and that Linda is the teacher. He expected both himself and Linda to play stereotypical roles: the teacher tells, the student listens.

In looking at the content described on the first content printout, Linda commented that Doyle had a lot of trouble with mechanics, so she and Doyle spent about 50

percent of the conference time dealing with such issues:

Teacher Sentence/Mechanics	31.4 percent
Student Sentence/Mechanics	18.8 percent

Linda felt that Doyle needed to spend this much time on

mechanics: punctuation, spelling, proofreading, agreement,

and proofreading in general. Linda then commented,

"Normally, I wouldn't want to spend this much time on

mechanics."

When Linda looked at the content printout from her

second conference with Doyle, she noticed that he had

increased the percentage of time that he spent on

rhetorical concerns by 20 percent. Also, there was a large

decrease in the percentage of time that she and Doyle spent

on mechanical concerns:

Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	12.2 to 18.9 percent
Student Rhetorical Concerns	11.8 to 29.1 percent
Teacher Sentence/Mechanics	31.4 to 1.4 percent
Student Sentence/Mechanics	18.8 to 2.0 percent

Linda speculated, as she had previously, that the peer

groups in her class were having an important, positive

impact on her students' mechanical problems.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This chapter is divided into three sections, each

of which analyzes the data presented in Chapter III in

light of the research questions:

Research question 1:   Were there differences in the content
                       and interactions in a teacher's
                       writing conferences after the teacher
                       received a tabulated printout
                       detailing the content and
                       interactions of earlier conferences?

Research question 2:   Did teachers attribute any changes in
                       their writing conferences to the
                       feedback system?

Research question 3:   Were there differences between a
                       teacher's self-evaluation of what
                       happens in writing conferences and
                       what actually happened in two sets of
                       conferences?

Relationship Between Intentions and Performance

In the self-evaluation interview, the GTAs and I

discussed the self-evaluation form. In the first feedback

interview, the GTAs and I examined the accuracy of the

transcript of the self-evaluation interview. Both Larry

and Linda proved that they were relatively astute in

declaring their intentions for their performance in

156

conferences. They generally did what they said they were going to do. After the second feedback interview, which followed the second set of conferences, both Larry and Linda observed that their performance had changed from the way they articulated it in their self-evaluation interviews.

Self-Evaluation Form and Interviews

Larry said that his conferences usually lasted twenty minutes and were text-based. His observations were accurate. He reported on the self-evaluation form that he wanted to concentrate on the single most important issue in his students' papers and criticize their work caringly, attempting to help his students improve their writing. He did this. Finally, he believed that his conferences were teacher-centered. It is this point that led to a discrepancy in Larry's perception of his conferences. When Larry said that his conferences were teacher-centered, he meant that he wanted to answer questions for his students about their writing. He envisioned these questions, however, as coming from the students. In fact, they seldom did. The difference between what he hoped would happen and what the printouts actually revealed about his students'

questions provided the context for him to evaluate his
conference performance. Using the printouts, Larry was
able to compare the self-evaluation form and his
remembrance of the conferences with his actual performance.

Linda's performance in conferences when compared
with her intentions stated on the self-evaluation form
follows a pattern similar to Larry's. Linda, however, said
that her conferences lasted twenty mintues, but frequently
they lasted from 25 to 35 minutes. Like Larry, Linda
reported that her conferences were usually text-based and
revision oriented. She said that she tried to answer and
deal with questions raised by the students. In fact, she
did answer their questions, but frequently, at least in the
first set of conferences, the questions that students asked
were based on comments that Linda had already made on the
papers. As a result, the students were parroting Linda's
concerns more than they were addressing their own. Linda
did recognize a part of this discrepancy during the
feedback interviews, but I could not ascertain whether she
recognized how she was still controlling her conferences
even though students later were asking more questions.

One issue raised during the self-evaluation
interview never was resolved, in part, because I did not

become directive during the subsequent feedback interview.
Linda has an unusual definition of a student-centered
conference. To her, a conference was student-centered when
she and the student dealt with the student's emotional
problems. This view was an idiosyncratic definition of a
student-centered conference. She did begin to see that a
part of a student-centered conference involved more active
participation of the student, which she strived to improve
in the second set of conferences. She did not, however,
completely give up her definition of "student-centered."

Feedback Interviews

At the end of the second feedback interview, I
asked Larry the following question: "How does where you
are in your conferences now compare with what you said on
your self-evaluation?" Larry said that there had been a
big shift. He said that, as a result of the first feedback
interview, "I realized that I had been doing most of the
talking and that I was doing most of the directing, so I
made up my mind that I was going to try to do differently
this time." He observed that he had been successful in
matching his intentions with what actually happened in his
conferences. His students were initiating more discussion,

and they seemed to know, at least at one level, what they
were struggling with. He still was finding lots of things
in their writing that they were not seeing.

During Linda's second feedback interview, I also
asked her to compare her performance with her stated
intentions on her self-evaluation form. Essentially, I
asked her the same question that I asked Larry: "Are there
any similarities or dissimilarities between what you said
in the self-evaluation and what these printouts reveal?"
She thought for a moment (actually for almost a minute) and
then said, "I'm not sure." She then said, "The only
question I would have in terms of that would be, are they
[her conferences] more teacher-centered than I thought they
were? Am I being didactic?" Linda wondered if she might
be talking too much. She was concerned whether she had
asked enough questions. I asked her what her sense of this
was. She thought she was asking more questions than
lecturing, but when she looked at the printouts, she could
tell it was the other way around.

Summary

As the literature predicted (Flanders, 1967;
Moskowitz, 1967; Storlie, 1967; and Zahn, 1967), the

evidence gathered in this study seemed to support the
contention that discrepancies frequently exist between what
teachers think they are doing and what they are in fact
doing. Both Larry and Linda thought they were looking out
for their students' best interests in conferences by taking
a central role in them. When they received their
printouts, their perception began to change. Larry's
performance may have changed more than Linda's once their
perceptions were clarified. Still, both recognized the
existence of a major discrepancy between their initial
desire to take center stage in their conferences and the
actual impact this stance was having on their students.

It seemed, however, that a self-evaluation was not
enough by itself to stimulate a change in teachers'
behavior. As I have already shared, both Larry and Linda
did put the intentions they stated on their self-
evaluations into practice in a relatively consistent
manner. Of course, articulating their hopes and plans for
their conferences before actually holding them may have
helped them be more consistent in their performance. Had
they not gone through the rest of the process, however,
they might not have recognized that their intentions were
not necessarily in the best interest of their students. It

was only when they were able to compare these intentions
with their performance, as revealed by the printouts, that
they were able to see the need for changes in their
approaches and begin to do something about bringing about
such changes.

Changes in Conference Interactions and Content

The data contained in the tables in this chapter
were taken from Data Summaries in Appendices E, F, G, and
H, which detail the interactions and content transacted in
both sets of conferences conducted by Larry and Linda. In
this section, I describe changes in the interactions and
content of both Larry's and Linda's conferences in relation
to each of the five factors, identified in the literature,
necessary for effective conferences:

1. Writing conferences should be student centered.

2. Students should have a clear idea of what to
   expect from a writing conference.

3. Writing conferences should be held at different
   points in the writing process.

4. Teachers should model appropriate writing
   behaviors during writing conferences.

5. Larger rhetorical issues should be dealt with
   first in writing conferences; surface features
   last.

I deal with the student-centered quality of the
conferences and the nature of student expectations together
in the first section. In doing so, I have analyzed both
interaction and content categories that reveal information
about these two issues. Finally, I address the remaining
three factors in separate sections.

Student-Centered/Clarity of
Student Expectations

Analysis of Conference Interactions

Larry's first set of conferences were essentially
teacher centered because the issues discussed were raised
most frequently by Larry as a result of what he saw working
or not working in his students' papers. The conferences
were student centered in the sense that he had his students
read their papers while he looked over their shoulders.

During the first feedback interview, Larry decided
that having students read their texts took too much time in
the conference. He resolved, therefore, to keep the actual
reading of the text to a minimum, reading only those
portions necesssary to clarify points raised during the

conference. His resolve was reflected in the dramatic
decrease in the time spent reading students' texts in the
second set of conferences. For example, in Kaplan's case,
the percentage of time the student spent reading the text
dropped from 20.7 percent in the first conference to 2.8
percent in the second conference. This downward trend was
maintained in all of his conferences with the exception of
Parton, and in this case, there was a slight rise, from 5.1
percent to 5.3 percent. Given the small amount of reading
to begin with, this slight rise does not seem to be
important.

One of the reasons that Larry wanted to decrease
the time spent reading the texts was to increase the
opportunities for student-initiated involvement in his
conferences. Larry was concerned during the first feedback
interview that he was being too didactic and not giving his
students chances to raise issues that were important to
them about their writing. Apparently, the information
Larry received in the first feedback interview caused him
to change his attitude toward his conferences and his
performance in them. These changes were consistent with
changes that Flanders (1967), Moskowitz (1967), Stoilie
(1967), and Zahn (1967) found in their research. As a

result of Larry's desire to become less didactic, he used
some of the increased time created by the decrease in the
time spent reading to ask his students more questions or to
allow them more time to generate questions of their own
(see Table 4). In Kaplan's case, the increase in the
number of questions he asked was dramatic. In other cases,
there was a slight increase or decrease, but this
fluctuation was no more than approximately 5 percent.

In the cases of Howard, Green, Griffin, and Parton
where there was a decrease in the number of questions that
Larry asked, there was an increase in the percentage of
time that these students spent responding to the questions
that he asked (See Table 5).

The percentage of time that Kaplan, Carter, Early,
and Green spent responding to Larry's questions and
comments increased dramatically in the second set of
conferences. In the cases of Howard, Griffin, and Riley,
there was an increase, but this increase was neglible. For
Howard and Griffin, the apparent reason for their small
increase in responses to Larry's questions was that they
asked more of their own questions, 17.5 percent and 13.6
percent respectively (see Table 7). More importantly, what
makes these increases in student-initiated responses more

Table 4

Larry's Questions

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

Kaplan	16.5% more
Howard	2.5% less
Carter	4.0% more
Early	5.0% more
Green	0.6% more
Griffin	1.1% more
Riley	8.6% more
Parton	1.8% less

Table 5

Student Response in Larry's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

Kaplan	18.7% more
Howard	3.5% more
Carter	35.6% more
Early	61.8% more
Green	28.7% more
Griffin	3.3% more
Riley	0.5% more
Parton	15.0% less

dramatic is that Griffin asked no questions of her own in the first conference and Howard asked questions only 1.4 percent of the time. The percentage of time that Parton spent responding decreased dramatically in relation to the other students. This response time decrease was accounted for by a large increase in the number of questions or comments that she initiated, an increase of almost 20 percent (see Table 7).

In Riley's case, there was not a dramatic increase or shift in any of the interactions between conferences. Larry said that this student's writing was more like that of a basic (remedial) writer than any other student in his class. As a result, even though Larry did ask 8.6 percent more questions, there is only a 0.5 percent increase in Riley's response to Larry's questions and only a 0.3 percent increase in questions that Riley asked. Larry said that no matter how hard he tried, he never could seem to find an effective way to open Riley up to possibilities in his writing.

The evidence seemed to indicate that Larry's second set of conferences was more student centered. Part of this change can possibly be attributed to changes in the students. For example, the students seemed more

comfortable in the second set of conferences and more
willing to raise issues on their own. Of course, their
ability to identify such issues also reflects an increased
perception and critical eye regarding their own writing.
Why they seem to be more comfortable and why they are
reading their own writing more critically are questions I
cannot answer. I can speculate that they were more
comfortable in part because they had been in Larry's class
long enough to know what his limits were. Regarding their
increased critical perception, the practice the students
had received by the second set of conferences, e.g., peer
response groups, feedback from Larry, and the experience
gained from writing and rewriting, probably had a positive
effect on their performance. Graves (1982), Bissex (1982),
Murray (1982), and Duke (1975) confirmed that the
effectiveness of conferences is improved when students
become accustomed to the conference situation and know what
to expect from them.

Though changes in the students may account for part
of the shift to more student-centered conferences, an
important part of the change should be attributed to Larry.
He asked good questions in both sets of conferences, but in
the second conferences he asked more questions of the

students. He also allowed the students more time at the beginning of the second conferences to initiate the discussion with their concerns, instead of starting with his questions. For example, in Howard's case, Larry did not even give the student a chance to initiate responses in the first conference. Instead, he immediately asked the student to read his paper. In the second conference, however, the first utterance Larry made to the student was "Well, how's your paper going?" Larry generally followed this pattern in his second set of conferences. Essentially, he was asking the kinds of questions that Graves (1976) contended teachers should be asking.

Larry's success in becoming less didactic in his second set of conferences is best reflected by the shift in the percentage of time he devoted to information and direction giving and by the general increase in the number of student-initiated responses (see Tables 6 and 7). Except for Howard, the percentage of time that Larry spent giving information dropped. The percentage dropped approximately 7-10 percent for Griffin, Riley, and Parton and decreased by about 20-30 percent for Green, Early, and Carter. With Kaplan, whose percentage decreased less than 1 percent, the increase in the percentage of

Table 6

Lecture/Information Giving (L/IG)
and Direction Giving (DG)
in Larry's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

	L/IG	DG
Kaplan	0.9% less	23.2 % less
Howard	2.2% more	13.3 % less
Carter	23.2% less	14.4 % less
Early	30.9% less	2.0 % more
Green	19.9% less	1.4 % more
Griffin	11.3% less	5.7 % less
Riley	6.8% less	4.9 % less
Farton	7.0% less	1.0 % more

student-initiated response, from 0 percent in the first
conference to 7.7 percent in the second, indicated that
this conference was still largely student centered.
Howard's case was very similar to Kaplan's. Though the
percentage of time that Larry spent giving information
increased by 2.2 percent, the conference was still student
centered since the percentage of Howard's student-initiated
response increased 17.5 percent. More importantly, the
time that Larry spent giving information, in these two
cases in particular, was in response to questions raised by
students rather than teacher-centered information.

In addition to the changes in the pattern of
information giving, the percentage of time that Larry spent
giving directions decreased in all but three cases. These
decreases ranged from approximately 5 percent for Griffin
and Riley to approximately 13.5 percent for Howard and
Carter and 23.2 percent for Kaplan. In the cases of Early,
Green, and Parton, the increased percentages were small,
less than 2 percent in each case. In Green's and Parton's
cases, the increase in the percentage of their student-
initiated responses suggests that any directions given by
Larry were in response to issues raised by the students.
The slight rise in the percentage of time that Larry spent

giving Early directions was neglible. Since she spent a relatively large amount of time responding to issues raised by Larry in the conference (61.9 percent), it appeared that she was working on solutions to problems in her writing, even though the issues might have been first raised by Larry.

The increase in student-initiated response also reinforced the observation that Larry's second set of conferences moved in a more student-centered direction (see Table 7). The percentage of questions asked or comments made by students increased in all cases except Early's. As I mentioned earlier, the increases for Kaplan, Howard, and Griffin were particularly dramatic since both Kaplan and Griffin had no student-initiated questions in the first conference and Howard only had 1.4 percent. Even though Early asked 3.3 percent fewer questions, given the large amount of time she spent commenting on issues raised either by her or Larry, this small decrease did not indicate that her second conference was teacher centered. Riley's small increase was to be expected since Larry said that this student was a basic writer who looked to Larry for specific directions.

In contrast to Larry's first set of conferences,

Table 7

Student-Initiated Response
in Larry's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

Kaplan	7.7%	more
Howard	17.5%	more
Carter	14.3%	more
Early	3.3%	less
Green	9.1%	more
Griffin	13.6%	more
Riley	0.3%	more
Parton	19.5%	more

which were somewhat student centered to begin with, Linda's
first set of conferences were clearly teacher centered.
The tapes revealed that unlike Larry, Linda did not have
her students read their papers at the beginning of the
conference. Instead, she usually asked the students if
they had understood the comments that she had made on their
papers and then proceeded to explain why she had marked
them as she had. After these explanations, she modeled
possible solutions to the students problems in much the
same way Larry did in his first set of conferences: she
asked questions that eventually led students to solutions
that she saw as workable ones for their papers. Asking
questions is a modeling strategy suggested by Graves (1982)
and Murray (1982); however, since the questions that Linda
asked lead to her solutions, not necessarily to the
students', the value of her modeling through questions was
probably weakened.

As she examined the printouts generated from her
first set of taped conferences, Linda was upset that she
asked so few questions. She felt that she was doing most
of the work in the conferences, being too didactic, and
telling students too much what to do. She wanted to change
this behavior in her second set of conferences. Her

changed perception of what she wanted to do in her
conferences apparently was caused by the information that
she received from the printouts during the first feedback
interview. Such a change in perception was consistent with
changes observed by Flanders (1967), Moskowitz (1967),
Storlie (1967), and Zahn (1967) in research similar to this
study. Though there were some shifts in the interactions
between the first and second conferences, the shifts in
Linda's conferences were not as great as those recorded in
Larry's conferences. For example, in the first feedback
interview, Linda said that she wanted to ask her students
more questions. Generally, however, she asked them fewer
(see Table 8).

However, Linda asked approximately 10 percent more
questions in both conferences than did Larry (see
Appendices F and G). Some of the decrease in the time that
Linda spent asking questions can be attributed to the
increase in student-initiated responses (see Table 9).
Eaves, Stone, and Jenkins all asked approximately 10
percent more questions in the second conference than they
did in the first one. Miller and Gray increased 5.6
percent and 3.2 percent respectively. Since both of these
students were upset about their grades in their first

Table 8

Linda's Questions

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

Brewer	0.6% less
Eaves	7.1% less
Stone	7.4% less
Jenkins	1.2% less
Miller	7.3% more
Gray	4.9% more
Doyle	0.8% less

Table 9

Student Initiated Response
in Linda's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

Brewer	1.9% less
Eaves	8.1% more
Stone	10.7% more
Jenkins	9.3% more
Miller	5.6% more
Gray	3.2% more
Doyle	0.5% more

conference, their initial conference experience with Linda
was somewhat negative. As a result, the increase in their
student-initiated responses was not as great as some of the
other students.

Brewer, according to Linda, was a very shy student
in class. This shyness appeared to carry over to Brewer's
performance in a conference. Though there was a slight
decrease in the percentage of student-initiated responses,
she still spent approximately 10 percent of the time in
both conferences asking questions of her own. Considering
her shyness and the percentage of questions that she did
ask, this slight decrease was probably not important.

The percentage of time that Linda's students
responded to her questions and comments decreased in most
cases (see Table 10). In the two cases where there was an
increase in the percentage of student response to Linda's
questions, I think the increase can be attributed to the
students' becoming more comfortable in talking to Linda in
a conference setting. For example, Gray was so upset about
his grade in the first conference that he cried. Though
the tears might be associated with anger, I had the
impression from the tape that he was crying because he did
not want the grade, but he realized that Linda was

Table 10

Student Response to Teacher Questions/Comments
in Linda's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

Brewer	7.3% less
Eaves	11.4% less
Stone	19.5% less
Jenkins	4.6% less
Miller	1.4% less
Gray	4.4% more
Doyle	20.5% more

justified in giving it to him. By the time the second
conference occurred, Gray had adjusted to the realities of
freshman English and was making an honest attempt to
improve his writing so that he could get the grades he
wanted.

Similarly, Doyle's behavior in the first conference
indicated to me that he was uncertain of himself as a
writer but he did want to please Linda. For example, when
Linda asked him if there was anything that he did not
understand about her comments on the paper, he said that he
understood everything. He did not, however, seem to want
to take the lead in the conference. He was perfectly
content to let Linda do the work. Linda centered on one or
the major problems with his paper, wordiness. She selected
a passage that was wordy and asked him if there was anyway
he could say the same thing using fewer words. He thought
about it for few moments and then gave her an example that
he thought might be less wordy. It was obviously still too
wordy, so Linda became more specific in her comments,
calling his attention to certain words and constructions in
the passage and asking him how he might shorten these.
Eventually, she led him in the direction that she wanted
him to head. As the conference proceeded, he seemed to

grow more comfortable working with Linda. Therefore, he participated a great deal more in the second conference though he still depended on Linda to guide him. According to Graves (1982), Bissex (1982, Murray (1982), and Duke (1975), such change is to be expected when students have a clear idea of what to expect in conferences with their teachers.

The shift in the interactions in Linda's conferences, especially the general decrease in the percentage of time students spent answering her questions and the increase in the percentage of time students devoted to asking their own questions, indicated that Linda's conferences did move in a more student-centered direction though the shift was not quite as dramatic as Larry's. The move toward more student-centered conferences was a positive one, according to Lindsay, 1966; Murray, 1968; Fisher and Murray, 1973; Graves, 1976; Nixon, 1977; and Carnicelli (1980). Also, just as in Larry's conferences, there was some evidence, e.g., Miller, Gray, and Doyle, that one of the reasons for this shift was the students' becoming more comfortable with Linda in a conference situation.

The change in the percentage of time that Linda

spent giving information and directions also confirmed that
her conferences moved in a more student-centered direction
(see Table 11). Linda gave fewer directions to all
students, which was consistent with her desire to be less
didactic in her conferences. She was not, however, as
successful as Larry in decreasing her "telling." In four
of her second conferences, she gave students more
information than she had in the first conference. In the
cases of Jenkins and Doyle, she told them only
approximately 2.5 percent more, but in the cases of Eaves
and Stone, she told them almost 20 percent more than she
did in the first conference. The increase for Jenkins and
Doyle was so small that it can easily be attributed to
idiosyncrasies of the day, the conference, and the text.
Eaves and Stone, however, both had approximately 10 percent
more questions. As a result, when Linda was giving these
students more information, she was doing so more in the
context of the students' concerns than hers.

Shifts in the silence category also indicate that
Linda was trying to be less didactic in her second set of
conferences. During the first feedback interview, Linda
was concerned that she was giving her students the so-
called answers too quickly. She decided, therefore, that

Table 11

Lecture/Information Giving (L/IG)
and Direction Giving (DG)
in Linda's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

	L/IG	DG
Brewer	2.5% less	1.4 % less
Eaves	18.4% more	6.1 % less
Stone	21.0% more	5.6 % less
Jenkins	2.7% more	5.25% less
Miller	4.2% less	9.3 % less
Gray	4.3% less	5.5 % less
Doyle	2.6% more	10.3 % less

she would make a conscious effort to wait longer for students to respond. The evidence suggested that she was somewhat successful though she did not consistently allow for silence (see Table 12). Though none of these numbers was very large, Linda did allow for more silence in her conferences than Larry.

Analysis of Conference Content

Observed changes in the Interpretation of Text content category also reinforced the assertion that Larry's second set of conferences was more student centered. First, the percentage of time that Larry spent interpreting the students' texts decreased in every instance except in the case of Howard. Even in Howard's case, there was only a slight 1.8 percent increase, from 3.5 percent to 5.3 percent. In contrast, during the first set of conferences, Larry spent more time interpreting the texts than his students, except for Howard and Parton who spent 2.2 percent and 4.3 percent more time interpreting their texts than did Larry.

Almost the inverse of what happened in the first set of conferences was true in the second set. Generally, the students spent more time interpreting the text than did Larry (see Table 13). In the three cases that were less,

186

Table 12

Silence in Linda's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

Brewer	7.2% more
Eaves	1.5% less
Stone	2.0% more
Jenkins	2.2% less
Miller	4.0% more
Gray	5.2% same
Doyle	6.1% less

Table 13

Student Interpretation of the Text
in Larry's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

Kaplan	8.3%	more
Howard	8.7%	more
Carter	14.8%	more
Early	3.8%	less
Green	13.0%	more
Griffin	4.9%	more
Riley	2.9%	less
Parton	8.8%	less

Early and Riley had no interpretation of the text in their second conferences. In Parton's case, the decrease in the percentage of time that she spent interpreting the text was accounted for by a concurrent rise in the amount of time that she spent discussing rhetorical issues.

The principal observation that I can make as a result of examining this particular category is that the students were taking a more active role in discussing the content transacted in the second set of conferences. In fact, by comparing the percentage of time that students spent discussing the content in the second set of conferences with the percentage of time they spent discussing content in the first set, there is an increase in every case (see Table 14). Even the two cases where the increase was small were easily explainable. In Parton's case, her involvement in her first conferences was high, so a large increase should not be expected in her second conference. Riley, of course, was the basic writer who looked to Larry for specific directions on what he should do to "fix" his papers. Even he was more active in his second conference.

In Linda's first set of conferences, both Gray and Miller were upset about the grades that they had received

Table 14

Content Transacted by Students
in Larry's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

Kaplan	25.7% more
Howard	22.2% more
Carter	46.3% more
Early	38.0% more
Green	34.3% more
Griffin	18.8% more
Riley	3.5% more
Parton	6.8% more

on their papers. As a result, Linda spent a good deal of
time justifying the grades that she had given the papers.
The evaluation content category reflected the nature of
these conferences. In Miller's case, over 50 percent of
the conference time was spent on evaluative concerns and in
Gray's case, over 30 percent. In the second conference for
both students, both Linda's and the students' attention was
focused on a revision of the paper the students had brought
with them to the conference. Given this difference in
focus during the second conference, I expected to see Linda
ask more questions and she did.

Summary

All of the evidence seems to support the contention
that the interactions in Larry's second set of conferences
moved in a more student-centered direction. The decrease
in the amount of information and direction giving on
Larry's part coupled with the increase in student response
to Larry's questions and the increase in student-initiated
response, suggested that Larry was successful in becoming
less didactic and allowing his conferences to be more
student centered. The shift in the interactions in Larry's
conferences is consistent with expert opinion (Lindsay,
1966; Murray, 1968; Fisher and Murray, 1973; Graves, 1976;

Nixon, 1977; and Carnicelli, 1980).

Linda's shift to a more student-centered conference was not as great as Larry's. For example, Eaves and Stone asked more questions, 8.1 and 10.7 percent respectively. They both decreased in the percentage of time they spent responding to Linda's questions, Eaves 11.4 percent less, and Stone 19.5 percent less. The rest of the difference in the time spent in these conferences was generally taken up by Linda's spending a greater portion of the time giving information. Though generally Linda did ask more questions of her students, she still played a dominant role. A lot of this information giving was in relation to issues raised by students, but Linda still often influenced the issues that the students raised. For example, in the second conference that Linda had with Stone, the student asked a question at the beginning of the conference about why she had not fulfilled the requirements of the assignment. Linda explained to the student that she needed to choose one of two possible points of view and then develop it consistently. Instead, the student had tried to develop both points of view, and as a result, the paper ended up without a clear focus. Linda asked the student which point of view she wanted to take. The student made a choice, and

then Linda told her what to do. This scenario revealed a
pattern that existed in most of Linda's conferences.
Though students were given the illusion that they had some
control in the conference, Linda was still actually in
charge. What Linda and her students discussed was largely
within the framework of what she saw happening or not
happening in her students' papers.

Interventions at Different Points in the Writing Process

Of the five factors necessary for successful
conferences, I will not address the recommendation that
conferences take place at different points in the writing
process. I taped and analyzed conferences in this study
that were text-based only. Larry and Linda both conducted
primarily revision conferences, and their students were
required to meet with them at least twice during a quarter.
Prewriting conferences were less frequent for both Larry
and Linda. Usually, students requested such conferences.
Many of Linda's conferences taped for this study, however,
had both revision components and prewriting components. In
other words, she would discuss a revision of an earlier
paper with a student and then discuss the student's
upcoming paper in the second portion of the conference.

Modeling of Solutions to
Writing Problems

The information gathered in this study did not
reveal a great deal about the kinds of modeling that Larry
and Linda did in their conferences. In listening to the
tapes, however, it seemed that most of the modeling that
went on in both Larry's and Linda's conferences was
accomplished through questioning, followed by information
giving and occasionally direction giving. Whether the
issues for discussion were raised by Larry or Linda or
their students, once the problem had been clarified, both
Larry and Linda described a remedy to the problem.

Questioning, a technique suggested by Graves
(1982;1976) and Bissex (1982), was strong in both sets of
Larry's conferences. For example, in Larry's second
conference with Howard, he asked him, "Well, how's you
paper going," and in his first conference with Griffin,
Larry asked, "What problems are you having?" These
questions were similar to the ones suggested by Bissex
(1982).

In his second conference with Griffin, Larry did
not have to ask Griffin a question because she started the

conversation, saying that she was trying to get her paper
right. She was trying to compare and contrast the
differences between cross-country runners and track
runners. She told Larry that she was having a problem with
balance in her paper. Larry responded in a general
fashion, telling her "I just want it [the paper] to be
smooth, not lumpy." He then asked her a question about the
structure of her paper. In his questions and comments that
followed, Larry was trying to interpret what the student
was saying about her paper, focusing on the student's
needs, rather than his own.

Not all of the questions used in modeling should be
general. Some questions should be leading ones, questions
that guide students to their own solutions, rather than
teachers just giving students the answers (Graves,
1976:650). Larry was good at asking these kind of
questions. For example, in his first conference with
Griffin, at the beginning of the conference, he asked her
what problems she was having with her paper. When the
student gave a rather vague response, he asked her to read
her paper. After she finished reading, Larry shared his
observations with the student about what he saw happening
in the text. He then proceeded to ask Griffin several

questions to lead her to possible solutions to the central
problem with the text as he saw it: the paper's focus was
too general. He first asked her why she wrote about
Marshfield, a small fishing village in Massachusetts. The
student said that it was a special place. Larry asked her
in what way it was special. The student said that it was a
small town. Larry asked her what part of the town she
liked the best. The student gave a vague, general answer.
Larry then asked her, "If you could pick out a certain part
of that town, what did you like the best about it?" The
questions and answers in this conference continued in this
back-and-forth fashion until Larry finally led the student
to a point where she could identify a specific place in the
town that was important to her, the marina. He then
continued to ask her questions about the marina until she
had generated enough specific details to go back and write
about this newly-found focus for her paper with more detail
and specificity. In contrast to these first-conference
interactions, Larry said nothing at the beginning of his
second conference with Griffin. Instead, the student
brought up the first topic for discussion. His questions
throughout the rest of the conference were largely aimed at
helping the student to understand and solve the problems

that _she_ had identified in her paper. By the probing questions he asked, Larry was modeling an ideal self of the kind described by Murray (1982).

A great deal of the modeling in Larry's first conferences, however, was accomplished through information or direction giving. Whether the issues discussed were raised by Larry or by his students, through Larry's skillful questioning, he suggested many of the possible remedies to problems in his students' papers by telling them what they might do. In his second set of conferences, he more frequently let his students generate possible solutions to their problems, but he did not totally avoid giving information or directions. Carnicelli (1980) would support Larry's behavior because he contends that successful conferences should not be totally non-directive. Teachers do need to take an active role in conferences while not forgetting that their students also have something of value to offer.

Linda's questioning at the beginning of her conferences was not quite consistent with what experts suggest (Graves, 1982 and Bissex, 1982). She frequently began her conferences with questions like "Hi, how are you today Kathy," and then followed up with a directive

question, e.g., "Did you understand the comments that I made on your paper?" As a result, the issues discussed in her conferences were often ones that she raised, not issues generated by her students. Linda did improve, however, in her second set of conferences. For example, her first question in her second conference with Stone was, "Do you have any questions?" This was a more general question of the kind recommended by Bissex (1982).

In her second set of conferences, Linda also asked more probing questions, as suggested by Graves (1976). For instance, in her second conference with Doyle, Linda began the conference by asking, "What are we looking at here today?" Doyle said that he wanted to add some details to his paper. Linda asked him where in his paper he wanted to make these additions. The student gave a vague answer, so Linda began probing what the student was trying to do. She asked him, "How do you feel about your conclusion?" Doyle felt that he had not written it very clearly. Linda then commented, "Okay, what, for example, are some of the things that you've mentioned in your paper that you want to include in your conclusion?" As Linda continued to question Doyle, he began to see that he had some gaps in logic in his paper.

Similar to Larry, Linda modeled many possible
solutions to problems in her students' writing through
information and direction giving. She did, however,
especially in the second set of conferences, try to lead
her students to their own conclusions through questioning.
After students had identified alternatives, which Linda
occasionally provided, Linda felt free to be more directive
with her suggestions. For example, in the second
conference when Doyle recognized gaps in his logic, Linda
asked him about these gaps. His paper dealt with survival
after a nuclear war. Doyle had said that he would hunt to
provide food. Linda asked him what he would hunt under the
circumstances. He had made reference to using appliances
that would need a power source. She asked him what his
source of power would be: "What about solar power?" Doyle
said that he did not know if a solar generator would work
or not. Linda then asked him about gasoline or human
powered generators. Doyle considered these possibilities.
Linda then made some specific suggestions
(information/direction giving). Carnicelli (1980) would
support Linda's blend of probing, leading questions with
information and direction giving. Also, though she might
have been directive at times, Linda did model a kind of

ideal self as a writer through her probing questions that
Murray (1982) would not totally reject.

Both Larry and Linda were relatively successful in
modeling the kinds of questions that their students needed
to ask about their writing. They also modeled appropriate
solutions to problems that their students were having with
their writing. Larry's and Linda's skill at modeling
seeemed to improve in the second set of conferences, which
suggested that the feedback process was a positive
influence on their modeling performance in conferences.

Nature of the Content Transacted

Consistent with what the literature suggests,
larger or rhetorical issues dominated the content
transacted in Larry's conferences. Both Larry and his
students discussed primarily rhetorical issues, giving
little attention to sentence level or mechanical concerns.
This content emphasis in Larry's conferences agrees with
what Freedman (1982), Garrison (1981), Carnicelli (1980),
and Murray (1968) recommend.

One content category that changed dramatically was
the Content Uncodable category (see Table 15). This drop
reflected the decrease in the time that Larry's students

Table 15

Content Uncodable in Larry's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

Kaplan	13.2% less
Howard	9.2% less
Carter	17.8% less
Early	15.6% less
Green	17.4% less
Griffin	7.2% less
Riley	3.5% more
Parton	1.3% less

spent reading their papers in the second set of conferences. The increase in Riley's case was a result of the student's wanting to read his paper in the second conference. It appears, since he was a relatively basic writer and, therefore, insecure, that once a pattern was established in the first conference, he wanted to follow it in the second.

Observed instances in extraneous content, sentence structure or mechanical concerns, and process strengths and weaknesses in Larry's second set of conferences seldom occurred (see Appendix F). Very little extraneous content was transacted in either the first or the second set of conferences. When such content was discussed, Larry usually generated slightly more than his students. Sentence structure or mechanical concerns were seldom discussed. Tallies in this category are almost nonexistent. Finally, Larry and his students discussed little regarding process strengths and weaknesses, evaluation, or clarification of the assignment.

The time that Larry spent dealing with rhetorical concerns was relatively consistent in both sets of conferences. On the average there was only a shift of 3 to 4 percent in either direction (see Appendix F). Howard and

Carter, however, were two exceptions to this pattern.
Larry discussed rhetorical concerns 12.9 percent less in
Howard's second conference and 28.9 percent less in
Carter's second conference. Both of these students,
however, spent more time interpreting their texts, and this
increase in student interpretation accounted for the drop
in Larry's discussion of rhetorical concerns.

The most important change that took place in the
content of the second set of conferences was the percentage
of time that Larry's students spent discussing rhetorical
concerns (see Table 16). All students increased the
percentage of time they spent discussing rhetorical issues.
Parton, Griffin, Howard, and Kaplan each increased
approximately 13 percent; Green and Carter, approximately
25 percent, and Early, almost 50 percent. Even Riley, the
basic writer, spent more time discussing rhetorical issues.
Apparently, by not having the students read their texts and
by attempting to change the interactions in his
conferences, Larry also caused a subsequent change in the
content transacted in the second set of conferences. As a
result, not only Larry's concerns but also his students'
concerns were compatible with content that the literature
believes to be necessary for effective conferences

Table 16

Student Attention to Rhetorical Concerns
in Larry's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

Kaplan	13.3% more
Howard	12.0% more
Carter	22.4% more
Early	46.9% more
Green	27.9% more
Griffin	15.3% more
Riley	4.0% more
Parton	11.4% more

(Freedman, 1982; Garrison, 1981; Carnicelli, 1980; Murray, 1968).

The content transacted in Linda's conferences was more difficult to comment on than in Larry's conferences. For one thing, Linda spent more time on sentence level and mechanical concerns. Though she paid attention to rhetorical issues, there did not seem to be an emerging pattern. The amount of attention that Linda gave to sentence level or mechanical concerns was somewhat at variance with what Freedman (1982), Garrison (1981), Carnicelli (1980), and Murray (1968) suggest. These experts contended that rhetorical issues should dominate the content discussed in a conference.

In Linda's conferences, essentially no interpretation of the text took place. From looking at the student papers, I did not think this lack of interpretation meant that Linda's students wrote more clearly than Larry's or that content discussed in Linda's conferences was sharper. Perhaps instead the lack of figures in this category indicated the control that Linda exerted over her conferences. Her interpretation was the correct one, so there was little need to interpret any portion of the text.

A major difference between Linda's second set of

conferences and Larry's was the percentage of time that Linda spent on sentence level and mechanical concerns. Larry almost never discussed sentence and mechanical issues while Linda discussed such matters frequently (see Table 17). Although a possible explanation for Linda's spending more time on sentence level or mechanical concerns might be that her students' papers were more in need of such attention than Larry's, nothing in her students' texts , indicated that her students' papers were any worse than Larry's in terms of sentence structure and mechanical proficiency. Consider the opening passages from the two following papers that were discussed during the first set of conferences:

Doyle (Linda's Student)

As the chairman of this year's welcoming committee, I want to welcome you to the Virginia Tech campus. Virginia Tech is the largest college in the state of Virginia and the one I hope you will come to like the most. In your year of studies, it will become a necesscity for you to know all you can about the social and recreational life here, as well as, the classes on your agenda. As an exchange student attending tech, classes will make up most of your time and rightfully so because that's what you are here for.

When classes begin the town of Blacksburg grows from a summer ghost town to a striving metropolis of over 25,000 people. This is the time of the year when many extracurricular activities begin in the town of Blacksburg. As the fall progresses the college football season begins.

Table 17

Linda's Attention to Content
(First Conference)

	Rhetorical	Sentence Level/ Mechanical
Brewer	5.8%	36.2%
Eaves	30.8%	9.2%
Stone	26.3%	13.3%
Jenkins	23.4%	18.6%
Miller	15.4%	4.5%
Gray	27.6%	6.3%
Doyle	12.2%	31.4%

Football season is a main highlight of the fall
here as the entire town's happenings revolve around
this. . . .

Kaplan (Larry's Student)

From the balcony of my Uncle Vic's home,
looking just past the deep greenery of the well
wooded neighborhood, I take in the splendor of the
Atlantic Ocean. The vastness of the sea, which
always entrances me in Virginia Peach, and the
green splendor of the rolling hills come together
in Marshfield, Massachusetts. In more than visual
beauty, Marshfield combines the best of several
areas.
Although primarily middle class residents,
the people of Marshfield have successfully kept the
small fishing town atmosphere. Marshfield, right
outside of Boston, is in sharp contrast to the
business of the city, yet the lifestyle of the
homes is of high standards.

Granted, there are problems with both of these

passages. However, there does not appear to be enough

difference to justify the amount of time that Linda spent

discussing sentence level or mechanical concerns. Both of

these papers have the larger problem of lacking focus.

Until this problem was taken care of, there was little to

be gained from talking about sentence level or mechanical

concerns. Apparently, Linda may have a bias about sentence

level or mechanical concerns that caused her to address

these issues with such fervor in her conferences. Whether

or not this bias actually existed was difficult to prove.

Her penchant for mechanical concerns, however, was a factor

which caused her conferences to be unfocused at times. Linda had lengthy conferences, frequently spending from 25 to 35 minutes with one student, first conducting a revision conference and then conducting a prewriting conference on the student's next paper. Within these conferences, particularly the revision portions, she shifted back and forth between sentence level and rhetorical concerns. As a result, it was difficult for students to learn or to know how they should approach their revision efforts. They did not learn what issue was of most importance.

During the first feedback interview, Linda was disturbed by the amount of time the printouts showed that she was spending on sentence level concerns. She said, however, that her intention in focusing on these smaller concerns was to help students remove surface errors from their papers so that both she and the students could focus on the larger rhetorical issues. This reasoning aside, she felt that she needed to pay more attention to the larger problems in her students' papers.

In Linda's second set of conferences, the numbers suggested that she was somewhat successful in shifting the nature of the content discussed in her conferences (see Table 18). However, the pattern was more complicated than

Table 18

Linda's Attention to Content

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

	Rhetorical	Sentence Level/ Mechanical
Brewer	10.9% more	26.6% less
Eaves	9.5% less	15.9% more
Stone	2.9% more	5.8% more
Jenkins	6.4% more	9.2% less
Miller	38.0% more	4.5% less
Gray	12.8% more	1.0% less
Doyle	6.7% more	30.0% less

the figures initially suggested. With Eaves, for example, Linda spent less time on rhetorical concerns and more time on sentence level concerns. This shift meant that in the second conference, only about 20 percent of the time was spent discussing rhetorical issues while 25 percent of the time was spent dealing with sentence level concerns. Nothing in the papers themselves indicated that the focus of the second conference should have shifted to sentence level concerns so drastically. Given no major difference in the degree of sentence level and mechanical proficiency in either paper, it seemed that the reason for this shift was Linda's tendency to point out mechanical errors in a paper when she was asked to defend a grade. For example, in the first set of conferences, Miller and Gray were both upset about their grades, but they were not concerned about grades in the second set of conferences. As a result, there was a shift in the content from the first to the second set of conferences from mechanical to rhetorical concerns. The inverse was true with Eaves and Stone. They were not concerned with their grades in the first set of conferences, but they were in the second set. The content in their conferences shifted from rhetorical to sentence level or mechanical issues. Regardless of this tendency of

Linda's to focus on surface features in defense of her
grading decisions, Linda did generally give more attention
to rhetorical issues in the second set of conferences.

Linda's students' concern for rhetorical issues
also changed for the better in the second set of
conferences (see Table 19). These figures did reveal a
somewhat consistent pattern. Brewer, Jenkins, Miller,
Gray, and Doyle all moved toward a greater concern for
rhetorical issues and less emphasis on sentence level or
mechanical concerns. It appeared that when a small
percentage of time was devoted to sentence level or
mechanical concerns, both Linda and the student spent about
the same percentage of time discussing these concerns.
This consistent pattern was true for Brewer, Jenkins,
Miller, Gray, and Doyle (see Table 20). But when a large
percentage of time was spent discussing sentence level or
mechanical concerns, Linda spent at least twice the amount
of time that students did on these issues. For example,
Linda spent almost 20 percent of Stone's second conference
discussing sentence level concerns while Stone only spent
approximately 10 percent. In the case of Eaves, Linda paid
ten times more attention to sentence level concerns than
did Eaves. Given the concurrent increase in information

Table 19

Student Attention to Content
in Linda's Conferences

(Percentage Change Between First
and Second Conferences)

	Rhetorical	Sentence Level/ Mechanical
Brewer	4.2% more	6.5% less
Eaves	7.9% less	3.8% less
Stone	11.1% less	2.2% more
Jenkins	10.2% more	7.7% less
Miller	32.7% more	1.5% less
Gray	15.1% more	3.2% more
Doyle	17.3% more	16.8% less

Table 20

Comparing Sentence Level Concerns
in Linda's Second Conferences

	Linda	Students
Brewer	6.6%	5.0%
Eaves	25.1%	2.5%
Stone	19.1%	9.0%
Jenkins	9.4%	8.1%
Miller	0.0%	0.0%
Gray	5.3%	6.1%
Doyle	1.4%	2.0%

giving in the second Eaves' conference, it seemed apparent that Linda was spending a lot of time in this conference explaining to Eaves what was needed to straighten out her sentence structure and mechanics. The problem was that the sentence level and mechanical problems in the second paper did not warrant this kind of attention. However, the student did ask 8 percent more questions in the second conference, so Linda's elaborate explanations were somewhat triggered by the questions asked by Eaves.

In summary, there was some shift in the content of Linda's conferences, but the shift was not as great as Larry's. The shifts in Linda's second conferences seemed more idiosyncratic than in Larry's, and Linda was still spending too much time on sentence level concerns in her second conferences, given the larger, rhetorical problems that existed in her students' papers. She tried to focus on the rhetorical concerns, but she kept getting side-tracked by smaller concerns.

Effectiveness of the Feedback Process

To review, the feedback process consisted of a self-evaluation, a self-evaluation interview, and two feedback interviews where Larry and Linda examined

printouts revealing the interactions and content in their conferences. Both Larry and Linda found this feedback process to be useful to them. I asked them to comment specifically on this issue during both feedback interviews. Larry discovered that he needed to prompt his students to find form in their writing and to encourage them to do a better job of preparing for their conferences with him. Prior to the feedback interviews, Larry had not been aware of how teacher-centered his conferences were. The printouts helped him make this discovery. He said that he usually remembered the jist of what had happened in his conferences but that the printouts helped him put "flesh" to his remembrance. During the second feedback interview, Larry observed a closer match between his intentions and performance.

Linda's reactions to the process were also positive. Before the first feedback interview, she was afraid that she was going to discover that she "had done everything wrong." She was pleased to find that some positive things had happened. She also made two important observations. First, she recognized that she was going to have to let her students do more of the work in her conferences and initiate more of the content to be

discussed. Second, she realized that she needed to
concentrate more on rhetorical issues. The printouts from
the second feedback interview strengthened her resolve to
continue to try to accomplish these two goals. Just as
Larry had asserted, Linda found that the printouts helped
her to remember the specifics of what had transpired in her
conferences. Having these specifics detailed for her
allowed Linda to make some important connections.

Larry's Reactions to the Feedback Process

At the end of the first feedback interview, I asked
Larry to summarize what he was going to do about some of
the issues that he had raised during the interview. First,
he said that he wanted to prompt students to find form in
their own writing, to the degree that such a thing was
possible. He elaborated on this concept by saying that he
wanted "to see, over time, [if he could] bring them to a
point where they can put their hands on a form." Second,
he said that he wanted to try to ask more questions in
conferences. Finally, he wanted students to do a better
job of answering the pre-conference questions, so that he
and his students could start their conferences with the
problem that was causing students the most difficulty.

Furthermore, he said the printouts were consistent

with the way he remembered the conferences. He could see
that his conferences centered mostly on him. He was not
aware of this teacher-centeredness so much when he was
engaged in the act of conducting the conference. These
printouts allowed him to evaluate more objectively his own
performance at a distance. He said that he had a good idea
about what he needed to work on or focus on in subsequent
conferences. He said that before we started, he had not
expected anything to come of this whole process, but that
thus far, it had proven interesting.

At the end of the second feedback interview, I
again asked Larry for a reaction to this feedback process.
He said that handling all of the tapes was a little
bothersome, but he liked the fact that things had been
broken down into categories. He said that during a
conference, he was not always aware of the specifics of
what was happening. For example, he might know that the
student was talking more and that he was talking less but
he would not know the exact nature of these changes. He
could have guessed the general change but not the specific
changes.

At this point, Larry said that he could see that
the statistics had value, even more this time. "The first

time, I knew what was going on pretty much. The statistics did not surprise me. They surprised me the second time a lot. I didn't expect that I would learn anything this time." He knew that there was a difference between the first and second set of conferences, but he was surprised to find that there was as much a difference as there was.

I then asked him what the nature of this surprise was. He said that "When you're speaking, you're aware of yourself more," and "It sounds good to you, but when somebody else is speaking, . . . you're not quite as aware" of what is going on. "At least I haven't remembered it [the specific content of the conference] as well." Essentially, the numbers on the printouts were providing a partial picture of what had transpired in this second set of conferences. The categories were revealing. He said it was easy to see striking differences by having information coded in a quantifiable fashion. By looking at the printouts he could tell something about the time spent on issues such as rhetorical concerns: "It's an entirely different way of looking at the conference when you're grouping all of this information into categories that you don't see as you're doing it. It's like a schematic."

Linda's Reaction to the Feedback Process

At the end of the first feedback interview, I asked Linda what her reaction to this whole process was thus far. She said that it was "a lot more helpful than I thought it would be." She said that she was very apprehensive, thinking she would come into this interview to find out that she was doing everything all wrong. The main reason for this was a sense as she was taping these conferences that they were terrible. She found, as a result of examining the printouts, that they were more positive than she had thought. She then said that "It's useful to see . . . what I'm doing," adding, "Maybe I can find a way to make students more comfortable quickly, or if not, I'm just going to have to give up social life." She did say that she did not think she could teach good writing unless she saw her students as people. She was very concerned about establishing rapport with them.

She said that she thought this whole process would be helpful. For one thing, she felt positive about some of the details the printouts had revealed to her. However, she also discovered that she was doing some things that disturbed her: "You can't argue when you're looking at numbers." She then referred to one conference where the

student initiated little in the conference. She commented about this situation by saying, "I know that I'm going to have to turn the burden of it [initiating behaviors] to them, even though at times it might seem inefficient." She had told the students that the next conferences would be twenty minutes long and that if a longer conference was needed, they would schedule a longer one.

At the end of the second feedback interview, I again asked Linda what reaction she had to the printouts. She said that now she was "consciously concentrating more on rhetorical concerns and less on mechanics." "I think I see what I'm doing more clearly. . . . I'm also aware that how I remember a conference is not necessarily how it went." She remembered things but often not how much time was spent on a particular issue. For example, she remembered the conference with Gray as lasting for a very long time when actually it was shorter than most. Or in the second Stone conference, she did not remember that they spent so much time on mechanics. She then said, referring to the issues of mechanics and justifying a grade, that the next time a student came in to complain about a grade she was not going to jump on the mechanics first because

mechanics might be a part of the problem but not the most important problem.

Linda said that perhaps one of the most important things she was learning, as a result of this process, was "to let the student carry more of the responsibility for the conference . . . . I don't have to be a performer and keep the whole thing juggling, that it's to their benefit to be an active participant, rather than just a responder." She said that, in the instances where the students did take a more active role in the conference, she was seeing much better results on their papers. She reasoned, "It's their paper, and I think the fact that the conference is about their papers, and they're taking a more active role, makes them feel more possessive both of the conference and of their papers."

The feedback process had a positive effect on Linda's attitude toward her conferences and her performance in them, an effect consistent with what Flanders (1967), Moskowitz (1967), Storlie (1967), and Zahn (1967) have observed. She said that if teachers could find someone to code the tapes that "I think every beginning teacher should [go through this process]. I think you have a much more accurate perception of what you're doing in conferences,

and you get more self-direction in improving your
conferences. I feel fortunate in having gone through this
process."

Since the process seemed to help her, I asked her
if the process had hindered her in any way. She said that
she was concerned on the first set of conferences that the
tape recorder would be an intrusive factor and that it was
somewhat, but on the second set that it was no problem
whatsoever. Apparently, this whole process had been a
factor in her desire to switch to a more conference based
class next quarter.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In this chapter, I discuss the conclusions that I
reached regarding the three research questions investigated
in this study and the implications that these conclusions
have for future use of this feedback process as a
supervisory and research tool. Finally, I discuss
additional research that needs to be done on the issue of
providing teachers with feedback on their performance in
writing conferences.

Summary of Findings

<u>Research Question 1</u>: Were there differences in the content
and interactions in a teacher's
writing conferences after the teacher
received a tabulated printout
detailing the content and
interactions of earlier conferences?

The printouts discussed during the feedback
interviews did have an impact on both Larry and Linda. In
Larry's case, the printouts and interviews affected his
actual performance in writing conferences. In almost every
case, he was able to make his second set of conferences
more student-centered. The number of questions that he
asked did not increase markedly, but his students'

responses to his questions did increase (approximately 20
percent or better in five cases and as high as 61.8 percent
in Early's case). Larry's students also initiated more
response on their own. Beyond these changes in response
behavior, Larry decreased the amount of direction and
information that he gave his students. As a result of
these shifts in percentages, Larry's students increased the
amount of time they spent discussing the content transacted
in his conferences.

The printouts and the feedback interviews did not
have as great an effect on Linda's performance as they did
on Larry's. Linda actually asked more questions in both
sets of her conferences than Larry asked. The percentage
of questions that she asked in her second set of
conferences decreased, however. Linda's students did ask
more questions though the percentage of increase was not
great (approximately 10 percent or less). Also, the number
of responses that her students made regarding her questions
increased. Stone and Doyle increased their level of
response by approximately 20 percent. The other students
increased their response rate by about 10 percent or less.
Furthemore, Linda decreased the amount of time that she
devoted to direction giving in all of her conferences, but

the percentage of time that she spent giving information increased in three cases. In one of these cases, the increase was small. In the other two cases, Eaves and Stone, Linda's increase in information giving was accompanied by an increase in the percentage of time that Eaves and Stone spent initiating responses. Thus, Linda apparently gave information to Eaves and Stone within the context of issues raised by them, not Linda. The evidence seemed to support the contention that Linda's second set of conferences were more student centered though the degree to which they were student centered was not as great as in Larry's conferences.

Larry's modeling was sound in both sets of conferences. It was probably stronger in the second set because his leading questions prompted his students to generate their own solutions to problems in their writing, rather than Larry telling them what to do. The increase in his students' responses and Larry's decrease in his information and direction giving substantiate this change. Linda's modeling did change in her second set of conferences. She generally used the same techniques that Larry had used, but she became more consistent. She asked more general and less specific questions at the beginning

of her conferences and made better use of her leading
questions later on in her conferences.

Regarding content, Larry consistently focused on
rhetorical issues in both sets of his conferences. Because
of the changes in his students' interactions, the
percentage of time that his students spent discussing
content in his conferences increased in every instance. In
Carter's case, it increased as much as 46.8 percent. Part
of the changes observed in Larry's conferences can probably
be attributed to his students becoming more comfortable
with Larry and having a clearer idea what to expect from
him in their conferences. Though this explanation was a
possibility, it was also likely that Larry's desire to
change was a major factor.

The kind of content that Linda transacted in her
first set of conferences was different from Larry's. Linda
had a tendency to spend more time on mechanical issues than
Larry did, as high as 36.2 percent and 31.4 percent in the
cases of Brewer and Doyle respectively. In her second set
of conferences, Linda increased the percentage of time that
she spent on rhetorical issues with every student except
one. Linda's students also increased the amount of time
that they devoted to a discussion of rhetorical issues.

Finally, as in Larry's case, some of the changes in Linda's conferences can be attributed to her students becoming more comfortable in their conferences with Linda, but the major reason for change was probably Linda's desire to change. In summary, though there is some evidence that Linda tried to make some changes in her performance in conferences, the biggest change that Linda made was in her intention to change her conference behavior more than in her observed performance.

Research question 2: Did teachers attribute any changes in their writing conferences to the feedback system?

The experience of going through the entire feedback process from completing the self-evaluation form, to participating in the self-evaluation interview, and finally discussing the printouts generated from the two feedback interviews was a positive experience for both Larry and Linda. Both GTAs felt that being provided with numbers that objectively quantified what happened in their conferences was very helpful to them. By looking at these numbers in relation to their remembrance of each conference, they were able to understand more clearly what they were doing. As a result, they were in a position to make sharper decisions about their current and future

228

performance in writing conferences. In fact, both Larry
and Linda at different times during the feedback interviews
said that it was hard to argue with the numbers, no matter
what they remembered as having happened in a particular
conference.

I have no substantive evidence to suggest why Larry
was able to make a more dramatic change in his behavior in
writing conferences than Linda. It could simply be a
matter of differing skills in working in one-on-one
situations. It could be a difference in personalities or a
combination of factors. Prior experiences also may have
influenced the ability to make behavioral changes. At
several times during this study, it was evident that
Linda's experience had led her to believe that teachers
taught; the students listened. Although she said she
wanted to get her students actively involved, she was
unable to break previous patterns. Larry did not have this
problem. Having no previous experience, except student
teaching, Larry tended to be open to suggestions and
curious about watching what other people do.

Research question 3: Were there differences between a
teacher's self-evaluation of what
happens in writing conferences and
what actually happened in two sets of
conferences?

Both Larry and Linda were astute in evaluating their initial performance because there was not much difference between their first conference performance and what they said they would be doing on the self-evaluation form. This consistency, however, may have been caused by the form itself. Filling out the form and later talking about it, may have helped them clarify their thinking about what they wanted to do in their conferences. As Linda said at one point during this study, what she had written on the self-evaluation form was more of a "wish list than a valid description" of what she did in every conference.

Further, both Larry and Linda gave some very structured answers to questions on the self-evaluation forms. For example, when Larry responded to the question about how long his conferences were, in addition to giving me a guess about their approximate length, he also gave me a list of questions that he was going to have his students answer before coming to conferences. He also clearly delineated how his conferences were typically structured. Linda also gave such an outline. These very specific answers helped them to be consistent with what they said they were going to do in their first set of conferences. Apparently, just going through the self-evaluation portion

of this feedback process (the self-evaluation form and
following interview) can help teachers be more consistent
in their performance in writing conferences. Of course, if
what teachers are doing in conferences is wrong to begin
with, then becoming more consistently wrong does not help
students and their writing. Going though the self-
evaluation process alone is not enough to bring about
positive change or a change in the direction suggested in
the literature.

Implications for Supervision

This process can be a useful tool to help
supervisors give teachers or GTAs they are supervising some
feedback on what they are doing in writing conferences.
Taping and coding as many conferences as I did for this
study, however, would severely constrain a supervisor's
time. Supervisors who are working with a large number of
people do not usually have the time to tape and code as
many as eight students per teacher. I believe that a
supervisor could do at least two codings for his charges.
The GTAs could ask to have a particular student taped and
coded or the supervisor could select one at random. Then
another conference with the same student could be taped and

coded sometime after a discussion of the printout from the first tape.

Instead of just the supevisor doing the coding and providing the feedback, I think the best results over the long run would be to train the GTAs do use the interaction and content categories to code their own tapes. The results might not be as reliable as in a research study, but GTAs or teachers could be trained to code their own tapes with a reasonable degree of reliability. Such training would relieve the supervisor from the task of actually coding the tapes. GTAs or teachers who coded their own tapes also might increase their sensitivity to the specific interactions and content in conferences and how the two interact. Such increased sensitivity might enhance the quality of the feedback. People tend to remember and to react more strongly to what they learned on their own.

One of the real strengths of this feedback process is that it caused changes in Larry's and Linda's attitudes and performance, even when I tried to maintain a non-directive stance with them. I think this feature of the process is important because it suggests that the process itself has power of its own to bring about change.

In addition to the effect this process had on both Larry and Linda in terms of their attitudes and performance in writing conferences, an interesting added feature of the process was the heuristic power it had to stimulate thinking and discussion not only about procedures for conducting conferences but also about the writing process and the teaching of writing in general. This heuristic feature of the process can be very helpful to supervisors. Instead of conducting in-service presentations or telling teachers how to teach writing or conduct conferences, many of these issues can be reinforced as teachers raise the issues themselves as they go through this process, particularly the feedback interviews.

In this study Larry frequently engaged in speculation about the teaching of writing. Linda, however, seldom engaged in such speculation, preferring instead to talk more specifically about what was happening in each of her conferences with her students, trying to determine what techniques for conducting conferences might be most effective.

The Teaching of Writing

Concerning the teaching of writing, Larry digressed into several discussions about how writing might best be

taught. During the second feedback interview, as Larry commented on Howard's writing, he wondered what he could do to stimulate his students to put some of the life he saw in their journals into their more formal papers. He never came to a definitive answer, but later when he was discussing Carter's second conference, he began exploring the difficulty of finding real audiences for his students to write to or for. He raised these issues several times during the process.

Conducting Conferences

Regarding conference procedures, one of the first comments that Larry made was that in initial conferences teachers should model expectations for students. Next, while discussing his first conference with Kaplan, Larry said that it was so much easier just to tell students what to do. After some thought, however, he changed his mind. He came to the conclusion that telling students what to do would never help them become independent writers. Asking genuine, but leading, questions was a better procedure to follow. Larry also talked about the difficulties of working with basic writers in conferences because of the great many problems that they had in their writing that needed to be addressed at the same time.

To illustrate in a little more detail how this heuristic power manifested itself, I want to share some comments that Larry made about writing and writing conferences as he was discussing his second conferences with Griffin. Larry talked about how students view writing and how their perception can shape the dynamics of writing conferences. He began by saying that "it would probably be a better idea if I could get closer to the writing, if the students could get closer to the writing. Maybe that's the problem. [Students] tend to think of writing in abstract terms, not the raw business of writing." Larry went on to say that "when [students] come in and talk about their writing, they're talking [more] about ideas and less about the expression of those ideas in writing, and that's where the tough part comes, expressing ideas in writing. If I could get them to link up the two 'All right, you have ideas, I understand that. Now what about putting them into writing.' I would be heading in the right direction."

Linda also raised several points about what should be happening in conferences. For example, as she commented on her first conference with Jenkins, she came to the conclusion that it was important to help the students to learn how to generate the issues that they wanted to

discuss in conferences. Larry also raised the same point.
Her goal was essentially the same as Larry's: to help her
students become independent writers, to become more skilled
at making their writing do what they wanted it to do.

During comments on her first conference with
Miller, Linda wondered whether or not she should be telling
her students the solutions to their problems, as opposed to
helping them come to their own conclusions. She was afraid
that she was contradicting herself, doing too much of what
she did not want to be doing. I asked her how she could
overcome this problem and help her students take a more
active role in her conferences. She responded that perhaps
she should do more modeling in her first conference with
her students so they would have a better idea about how to
interact or behave in a conference.

Most experts on writing conferences advise against
spending too much time on sentence level or mechanical
concerns in conferences. However, Linda noticed that in
her first conference with Brewer she had spent a lot of
time on mechanics. She felt that this time was justified,
however, because Brewer's next paper was cleaner
mechanically. As Linda continued to look through the
printouts for patterns about her attention to rhetorical

and mechanical concerns, however, she decided that part of the reason for her attention to sentence level or mechanical concerns was her attempt to justify a grade. This discovery was a surprise for her. Beyond whatever else this process did for Larry and Linda, it surely provided them the opportunity to think about writing and how it might best be taught in writing conferences.

Implications for Future Research

This study has generated several questions that might be investigated in future research. First, some kind of study should be done to determine to what extent modeling by the teacher in a factor in writing conferences. Both Larry and Linda speculated that after they had established the basic conference procedure through modeling in the first conference that their later conferences went more smoothly. A study should be done to determine just how much change from one conference to the next was a function of either the student or the teacher or both becoming more comfortable with one another through modeling. Perhaps, the particular kinds of modeling that take place in a first conference versus a later one could be examined in some detail. Furthermore, a descriptive

study might reveal the kinds of modeling existing in conferences. Once the kinds of modeling have been described in some detail, studies should be done to determine the effect different modeling technqiues have on the interactions and content transacted in a conference. Additional studies could be done to examine the effect of certain kinds of modeling in conferences on the quality of student writing.

These categories and the same procedures for coding could be used for future studies. However, work needs to continue on establishing content categories. Researchers may never be able to give a full picture of the content transacted in conferences that are recorded and then coded in a linear fashion. Surface content is often guided by a deeper or higher content issue, presenting a problem when coding in a horizontal, time/order sequence. For example, in this study, there were times when students and GTAs were talking about rhetorical or mechanical concerns, and I coded the content transacted in this way. However, the underlying reason for the discussion was evaluation. The GTAs may have been defending a grade but, in the process of doing so, were talking about specific concerns, such as rhetorical or mechanical issues. Given this dilemma, I

coded whichever category seemed to be superordinate at the time.

Other research efforts could examine just how much change might take place if a GTA or teacher just listened to tapes of their conferences. Certainly they would notice some discrepancies, but would they notice them to the degree that Larry and Linda did when they had quantified printouts in front of them?

Another study that may help teachers do a better job of conducting writing conferences is to have some information about student expectations before, during, and after the conference process over a period of time. If student expectations did not change, then it would be interesting to see what impact this lack of change in expectation had on the interactions and content transacted in conferences and the quality of student writing. If student expectations did change, it might be revealing to trace the factors in the conferences themselves that might have led to the change.

One assumption drawn from the literature is that the more student-centered a conference, the better the conference (Carnicelli, 1981; Nixon, 1977; Graves, 1976; Fisher and Murray, 1973; Murray, 1968; and Lindsay, 1966).

Someone should examine the changes that take place in student writing when their conferences with teachers become more student centered. We assume their writing will be better. It may not. I know that when Larry, started giving his students more control in their conferences with him, the overall structure of the conference became less focused. Although I saw no negative effect on the student texts I examined, someone should investigate this issue thoroughly. For example, we may find that student-centered conferences do help students to become more independent in making decisions about and changes in their writing. We may find that if teachers actively listen, they may find that students point to the same issues in their writing that the teachers would have pointed out. However, if a conference becomes totally student-centered, we may discover that a lot of extraneous issues not really important to improving student writing may be discussed. If a conference focuses on extraneous issues, then the final outcome of student-centered conferences may be more negative than positive. It is possible that teacher-centered conferences may also yield observable, positive changes in student writing. At any rate, the assumption that student-centered conferences are better than teacher-

centered conferences needs to be explored in research.

Finally, one of the reasons that Linda was unable to change her performance in her conferences as drastically as Larry, and as quickly as she wanted, may be related to Larry's and Linda's different teaching styles. A study could be done that examines the effect of different teaching styles on teachers' ability to change their performance in writing conferences. Also, the amount of time that it takes different teachers to change should be investigated. Had Linda had more time, she might have modified her conference procedures to a greater degree.

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APPENDIX A

Criteria Used to Place Students
in Freshman English
Courses

During the 1983-84 academic year, at summer

orientation (or whenever new students first registered)

students were placed in one of the following four courses,

according to their scores on the Verbal section of the

Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Test of Standard Written

English, and the English Composition Achievement Test (when

available):

English 1000

Initial placement in English 1000 is determined by
the scores achieved on three standardized tests:
the Verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test,
the English Composition Achievement Test (if
available), and the Test of Standard Written
English. All students whose scores on these tests
average 339 or less are tentatively placed in this
course. Past experience has determined that these
students are severely unprepared for either the
regular first-quarter freshman English class
(English 1121) or the intensive alternate first-
quarter course (English 1120).

English 1120

Initial placement in English 1120 is determined by
scores achieved on three standardized tests: the
Verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the
English Composition Achievement Test (if
available), and the Test of Standard Written

English. All students whose scores on these three tests average between 340 and 399 are tentatively placed in this course. Past experience has demonstrated that students with these scores need the intensive practice in writing and additional work provided in English 1120 in order to succeed in the rest of the freshman English sequence and to write acceptably in the other courses in which they will be enrolled during their careers at Virginia Tech.

English 1121

Students whose scores fall between an average of 400 and 579 will enroll in the regular first-quarter course, English 1121, Introduction to Composition.

English H1221

Students whose average score on these tests is 580 through 609 may, if they wish, register for English H1221, Freshman Honors English. They may also register for Freshman Honors English if they are invited to be in the University Honors Program.

English H1222

Students whose average score on these tests is 610 or higher may, if they wish, register for English H1222, Freshman Honors English (second quarter).

A placement Essay test will be administered during the first week of the fall quarter, in the section of freshman English for which the student registered. On the basis of this essay, students may be moved to a different course. (The information in this appendix is taken from

the General Information booklet published by the English
Department at Virginia Tech. The selection criteria for the
1984-85 academic year has changed somewhat).

APPENDIX B

Self-Evaluation

Self-Evaluation Form

This form consists of the following statements:

1. Of the conferences I have with students, _____ per cent are spontaneous and _____ per cent are arranged.

2. The average length of my conferences is approximately _____ minutes.

3. I usually have conferences with my students at the following point(s) in the writing process:

4. My conferences are basically student/centered, teacher/centered, or _____-centered. (Explain your answer.)

5. My approach to conferences has been affected by . . . . (For example, books, articles, advice from others, watching others, experience, etc. Be as specific as possible.)

6. My goals for conferences are determined by . . . .

7. Depending on the goal(s) of a particular
   conference, I usually sequence the conference in
   the following way(s): (If you use different
   procedures at different times, please briefly
   outline them.)

8. I hope my students will take

   _____ away from my

   conferences.

9. My students say that my conferences are . . . .

10. Regarding my conferences, I find that

    _____ is most productive and

    that _____ is least

    productive. tapes to me.

Rationale for Using These Statements

The percentages reported in the response to
Statement 1 reveal information about who may be controlling
the conference or at least who initiated or requested the
conference. Such information is important because both the
teacher's and the student's expectations about a
conference, their reasons for being there, are important to
the success or failure of the conference (Sulkes, 1980;
Sherwood, 1982 and Murray, 1982). Statement 2 allows both

me and the GTAs to compare the length of the GTAs'
conferences to what experts advocate (Garrison, 1981;
Kates, 1977; Martin, 1981; Murray, 1968; Fisher and Murray,
1973; Fasler, 1978 and Carnicelli, 1980). Though a simple
statement, it could be important. If the GTAs' conferences
are falling apart and they're holding forty-five minute
conferences, maybe one reason for the failure is the time.

Statement 3 provides information about the GTAs'
conception of the writing process. Bissex (1982), Aviva
Freedman (1982) and Carnicelli (1980) believe that writing
conferences can take place at any point in the writing
process, though some points are more productive than
others. Further, conferences which take place at different
points in the writing process may call for different
techniques, interactions, or content. If the GTAs are only
holding prewriting conferences and never helping their
students with revisions, this reveals a limitation in their
approach to conferences, one that needs to be explored by
both me and the GTA. More importantly, if the GTAs' do not
think of writing as a process and they're still having
conferences, then this concept of writing is going to
affect what they do in their conferences. Chances are,
conferences held by GTAs with no concept of the writing

process would be didactic with the GTAs telling students what was wrong with their papers.

Statement 4 allows the GTAs to begin to reveal who dominates or controls their conferences. For example, if they say their conferences are student centered, which Duke (1975), Murray (1968) and others say they should be, and their conferences turn out to be teacher centered, the GTAs need to be made aware of this discrepancy between what they think is happening and what is actually happening.

Statement 5 allows me to determine what factors or sources have affected the GTAs' approaches to conferences. Knowing what these influences are might be important in helping the GTAs to remedy problems they were having. For example, if they had read one piece of research that said conferences made no difference and had not read another piece of research that said conferences did make a difference in student writing, knowing this might help me provide the GTAs with a more balanced view of the effectiveness of conferences.

Statement 6 again gets back to the issue of control in the conference. This time, however, the concept of focus is introduced. Garrison (1981) says that the teacher to a large degree determines the focus of the conference,

dealing with certain specific issues in different conferences. Still, the point where a student is in the writing process is a large factor in determining whether or not a teacher follows a predetermined hierarchy such as the one advocated by Garrison (1981). If the GTAs say that their goals for conferences are determined by their students' needs but then the tapes reveal that the goals are actually determined by the GTAs' preferences, the GTAs need to be informed of this.

Statement 7 gives both me and the GTAs some insight into whether or not the GTAs always follow the same format with students or if there are variations. Duke (1975), Graves (1982), Murray (1982) and Bissex (1982) all believe that one factor that leads to successful conferences is the predictability of their structure. The GTAs responses to this statement will provide some initial insight into the predictability or the lack of it in their conferences. Further, the GTAs' response to this item will reveal the degree to which they adhere to the broad sequence for conferences described by Arbur (1976). If there are variations in the structure of their conferences, the response to this statement will allow me to probe to see if there are legitimate reasons for this variation, e.g., a

student's needs might necessitate a different structure or emphasis other than what the GTAs would usually employ.

Statement 8 gently nudges the GTAs to consider what they value most in a conference. Whatever this quality or factor is, once it is articulated by the GTAs, both the GTAs and I will be in a position to decide later if it was possible to achieve this goal or outcome in the conferences taped. Statement 9 accomplishes two things. It allows the GTAs to reflect on times when students may have commented on their conferences with the GTAs. Also, it gently suggests to the GTAs that an important source of feedback about the dynamics of a conference is the student.

Finally, statement 10 can reveal what technique the GTAs find works best and which one helps the least. This is important. If the GTA, for instance, says that telling is more productive than asking, this says a lot about what may be happening in their conferences. In contrast, if the GTAs say that asking is more important when, if fact, they are doing a lot of telling, the feedback system will help them see this.

APPENDIX C

Categories for Coding Interactions in Writing Conferences

TEACHER TALK

INDIRECT INFLUENCE

1. ACCEPTS FEELING: accepts and clarifies the feeling tone of the students in a nonthreatening manner. Feelings may be positive or negative. Predicting or recalling feelings is included.

2. PRAISES OR ENCOURAGES: praises or encourages student action or behavior. Jokes that release tension, but not at the expense of another individual; nodding head, or saying "um hm?" or "go on" are included.

3. ACCEPTS OR USES IDEAS OF STUDENTS: clarifying, building, or developing ideas suggested by a student. As teacher brings more of his own ideas into play, shift to Category 5.

4. ASKS QUESTIONS: asking a question about content or procedure with the intent that a student answer.

DIRECT INFLUENCE

5. LECTURING: giving facts or opinions about content or procedures expressing his own ideas, asking rhetorical questions.

6. GIVING DIRECTIONS: directions, commands, or orders with which a student is expected to comply.

7. CRITICIZING OR JUSTIFYING AUTHORITY: statements intended to change student behavior from nonacceptable to acceptable pattern; bawling someone out; stating why the teacher is doing what he is doing; extreme sele-reference.

STUDENT TALK

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8. STUDENT TALK--RESPONSE PREDICTABLE: talk by students in response to teacher. Teacher initiates the contact or solicits student statement.

9. STUDENT TALK--INITIATION: talk by students,
    which they initiate.

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10. READING: when either the teacher or student
    are reading (orally or silently) portions of
    the text.

20. SILENCE: pauses or short periods of silence
    where either the teacher, the student, or both
    are confused.

APPENDIX D

Sample Conference Interaction Printout

ANALYSIS OF WRITING CONFERENCE INTERACTION

OBSERVATIONS PER INTERACTION CATEGORY
Conference 1: Brewer

TEACHER INTERACTION CATEGORIES
```
     01   ACCEPTS STUDENT'S FEELINGS
     02   ENCOURAGES/PRAISES
     03   ACCEPTANCE OF STUDENT'S IDEAS
     04   QUESTIONS
     05   LECTURES/INFORMATION GIVING
     06   DIRECTION-GIVING
     07   CRITICISM
     17   TEACHER READING TEXT
```

STUDENT INTERACTION CATEGORIES
```
     08   PREDICTABLE STUDENT RESPONSE
     08/  ANALYTIC STUDENT RESPONSE
     09   STUDENT INITIATED RESPONSE
     10   STUDENT READING TEXT
     20   SILENCE
```

CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	1	.371
2	4	1.486
3	0	0
4	33	12.267
5	56	20.817
6	68	25.278
7	0	0
17	9	3.345
8	55	20.446
9	9	3.345
10	4	1.486
20	26	9.665
ERR	0	0

APPENDIX E

Data Summary: Larry's Conference Interaction Categories
(in percentages)

Student Conference	Kaplan cf 1	 cf 2	Howard cf 1	 cf 2	Carter cf 1	 cf 2	Early cf 1	 cf 2	Green cf 1	 cf 2	Griffin cf 1	 cf 2	Riley cf 1	 cf 2	Parton cf 1	 cf 2
Accepts Student's Feelings	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	.43	0.9	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
Encourages/Praises	2.9	1.6	2.1	5.8	2.1	3.0	3.9	3.2	1.5	2.6	0.9	2.0	4.8	2.0	2.3	2.6
Accepts Student's Ideas	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.4	0.0	2.0	.43	0.5	7.0	0.0	3.9	0.4	1.5
Questions	3.7	20.2	11.2	8.7	2.5	6.5	2.2	7.2	9.2	9.8	9.0	10.1	2.8	11.4	9.3	7.5
Information Giving	24.4	23.5	20.3	22.5	31.2	8.0	41.3	10.4	32.7	12.8	19.3	8.0	31.9	25.1	28.4	21.4
Direction Giving	28.9	5.7	14.0	0.7	21.9	7.5	4.3	6.3	7.1	8.5	14.2	8.5	17.1	12.2	5.8	6.8
Criticizing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Teacher Reading	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	1.6	2.7	0.0	2.6
Student Response	14.5	33.2	38.5	42.0	11.4	47.0	16.1	62.9	17.3	46.0	28.8	32.1	17.5	18.0	34.2	19.2
Student Initiated Response	0.0	7.7	1.4	18.9	7.2	21.5	8.3	5.0	4.1	13.2	0.0	13.6	4.8	5.1	12.1	31.6
Student Reading	20.7	2.8	9.8	0.0	13.1	0.0	19.1	1.4	22.4	4.7	20.8	13.6	16.3	14.5	5.1	5.3
Silence	0.8	4.9	1.4	1.5	2.5	2.0	.87	3.2	1.5	.9	1.4	2.5	2.4	5.1	2.3	1.1
Error	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0

APPENDIX F

Date Summary: Larry's Conference Content Categories
(in percentages)

Student	Kaplan		Howard		Carter		Early		Green		Griffin		Riley		Parton	
Teacher Text Interpretation	14.0	0.4	3.5	5.3	7.2	5.5	16.2	0.0	9.4	3.9	9.3	2.4	7.8	0.0	11.1	0.8
Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	36.2	39.3	44.7	31.8	42.8	13.9	24.1	26.0	34.6	32.8	30.7	30.4	48.4	51.2	33.8	33.3
Teacher Sentence/ Mechanics	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7
Teacher Process/ Evaluation	4.3	1.2	0.0	1.5	5.5	8.5	9.2	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0
Teacher Extraneous Talk	7.7	10.0	2.8	0.0	1.3	2.0	3.5	5.0	7.9	0.4	2.9	1.0	2.0	1.6	2.1	3.1
Student Text Interpretation	0.0	8.3	5.7	14.4	5.1	19.9	8.8	0.0	4.7	17.7	2.0	6.9	2.9	0.0	15.4	6.6
Student Rhetorical Concerns	8.9	22.2	32.0	44.0	8.9	31.3	13.2	60.1	10.0	37.9	22.4	37.7	16.8	20.8	23.1	34.5
Student Sentence/ Mechanics	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.4
Student Process/ Evaluation	3.4	4.4	0.0	1.5	5.9	14.4	0.9	0.0	5.8	0.9	1.0	1.5	0.0	2.0	1.3	0.0
Student Extraneous Talk	1.7	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.6	3.4	2.1	0.4	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.4	3.4	1.5
Content Uncodable	22.3	9.1	10.7	1.5	20.8	3.0	20.2	4.6	23.0	5.6	22.9	15.7	19.7	23.2	6.8	8.1
Error	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.4	0.0

Data Summary: Linda's Conference Interaction Categories
(in percentages)

Student	Brewer		Eaves		Stone		Jenkins		Miller		Gray		Doyle	
Conference	cf 1	cf 2	cf 1	cf 2	cf 1	cf 2	cf 1	cf 2	cf 1	cf 2	cf 1	cf 2	cf 1	cf 2
Accepts Student's Feelings	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.9
Encourages/Praises	1.5	1.4	0.4	2.0	0.3	0.6	0.0	1.0	1.5	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.0
Accepts Student's Ideas	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.4	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Questions	12.3	11.7	17.7	10.6	20.5	13.1	17.5	16.3	13.0	20.3	13.2	18.1	15.3	14.5
Information Giving	20.8	18.3	17.3	35.7	23.6	44.6	20.1	22.8	31.4	27.2	32.1	27.8	21.0	23.6
Direction Giving	25.3	23.9	21.0	14.9	11.0	5.4	13.9	8.65	16.5	7.2	11.8	6.3	17.6	7.3
Criticizing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0
Teacher Reading	3.3	2.2	1.2	2.0	0.7	0.0	1.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.4	0.4	0.0
Student Response	20.4	13.1	24.7	13.3	35.6	16.1	42.3	37.7	32.6	31.2	30.3	34.7	31.3	51.8
Student Initiated Response	3.3	1.4	4.1	12.2	2.4	13.1	0.4	9.7	3.8	9.4	2.4	5.6	0.4	0.9
Student Reading	1.5	0.0	1.6	1.6	0.7	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	5.7	0.0
Silence	9.7	16.9	8.6	7.1	5.1	7.1	3.6	1.4	0.0	4.0	5.2	5.2	6.1	0.0
Error	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0

263

APPENDIX H

Data Summary: Linda's Conference Content Categories
(in percentages)

Student	Brewer		Eaves		Stone		Jenkins		Miller		Gray		Doyle	
Teacher Text Interpretation	0.4	0.0	0.0	10.5	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Teacher Rhetorical Concerns	5.8	16.7	30.8	21.3	26.3	29.2	23.4	29.8	15.4	53.4	27.6	40.4	12.2	18.9
Teacher Sentence/ Mechanice	36.2	6.6	9.2	25.1	13.3	19.1	18.6	9.4	4.5	0.0	6.3	5.3	31.4	1.4
Teacher Process/ Evaluation	3.5	7.1	2.5	2.1	0.0	1.7	7.2	3.8	35.3	1.8	18.0	0.8	7.4	0.7
Teacher Extraneous Talk	18.5	21.2	10.0	3.3	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.5	5.3	1.1	5.9	7.8	9.2	14.9
Student Text Interpretation	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.6	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Student Rhetorical Concerns	0.8	5.0	17.9	10.0	29.1	18.0	15.8	26.0	6.8	39.5	11.4	26.5	11.8	29.1
Student Sentence/ Mechanics	11.5	5.0	6.3	2.5	6.8	9.0	15.8	8.1	1.5	0.0	2.9	6.1	18.8	2.0
Student Process/ Evaluation	2.3	0.5	3.3	0.0	0.4	1.7	7.9	8.5	22.9	1.4	13.6	4.1	7.4	0.0
Student Extraneous Talk	7.3	5.6	5.0	2.9	2.2	1.7	3.1	6.0	2.6	0.4	3.3	3.3	1.7	9.5
Content Uncodable	13.1	31.8	14.6	12.6	11.9	14.0	3.1	2.6	0.4	2.5	8.1	5.7	0.0	23.6
Error	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0

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