CHAPTER 3.

THEORIZING FAILURE THROUGH TEACHER RESPONSE

Shane A. Wood
University of Central Florida

> Failure in writing classrooms may very well be one of the most important yet undertheorized concepts in composition studies.
>
> – Asao B. Inoue

> When we think about re-conceptualizing failure, we have to think not only about the personal realm but also about the sociocultural context in which failure is embedded and throughout which it circulates.
>
> – Allison D. Carr, "In Support of Failure"

As teachers, we've probably had a conversation with a colleague, advisor, or administrator about a student failing. More often than not, conversations around failure in education place blame on students as opposed to inequitable systems or classroom practices. I would argue that the student is rarely, if ever, the *issue* when it comes to failure in writing classrooms. Students are often marked as "failures" based on how they use language. Writing assessments are designed to offer feedback on the language choices students make in writing. Students are usually penalized by narrow interpretations and judgments of language despite organizational commitments to students' rights to their languages (see "Students' Rights to Their Own Language," 1974). Grades are tools of measurement placed on student writing to demonstrate success or failure. Success and failure in writing are associated with some idea of a "standard." Writing assessment becomes a "yardstick model" where students' languages are measured against standardized English, "a fixed ideal of writing" (Inoue, 2014, p. 333). Teacher response becomes a justification for the letter grade, or at the very least, used to interpret letter grades in traditional writing assessment, whether the teacher wants them to be or not.

While research in writing studies has taken up failure (Carr & Micciche, 2020), and while education studies and writing scholarship have taken up failure through grading and assessment (Schneider & Hutt, 2023; West-Puckett et al., 2023; Blum, 2020; Inoue, 2014; Inoue, 2015; Johnson, 2021), teacher response has received less attention in recent scholarship around failure. A basic keyword search

DOI: https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2024.2494.2.03

for "failure" in the *Journal of Response to Writing* leads to twenty-two results. Most are connected to grades or grading. None theorize failure through response. I find this absence in scholarship surprising for several reasons. It feels like now is a good opportunity to critically examine different aspects of classroom assessment, including teacher response. I feel like now is the time to re-emphasize response and why we respond while simultaneously questioning the status quo. It feels like now is the time to double down on the importance of response, arguably the most important part of teaching writing, while critiquing inequitable systems of assessment.

Grades aren't always the issue. A student might receive a "good" grade and still receive feedback that makes them feel detached and indifferent about their writing. A student can perceive a marginal comment as negative regardless of a "good" grade. If I'm being honest, I feel like my students have more visceral reactions and memories around teacher response than they do grades. Students' lack of interest in writing when they get to first-year composition seems to come from what they've been asked to write about (e.g., assignments) and how they've received feedback in the past (e.g., teacher response). Students seem to carry with them memories of feedback that have generated emotional responses, which have caused harm or, at the very least, caused them to disassociate from the writing process. Writing is no longer fun. There's no creativity, risk-taking, curiosity, child-like joy when it comes to engaging in writing. In part because of the systems, standards, and conditions that surround the teaching of writing. But I also think there's something to be said about how teachers respond to student writing.

Students tend to remember comments that made them feel like failure. When I ask my students to reflect on previous writing experiences in school, they rarely, if ever, talk about grades. Instead, they share stories about how the response made them feel. They talk about receiving red marks on their writing, or a comment in the margins that made them feel inadequate, or an end comment that was confusing.

Maybe these reactions toward response are memorable because feedback feels more personal than a letter grade. A letter grade is a symbol. Feedback is language—words, ideas, thoughts, feelings—in response to how someone chooses to use language. Maybe a marginal comment stands out not just because it makes visible an audience but because it intervenes on a specific idea a student was willing to share with us. We know writing is interconnected with identity. There's vulnerability and power in writing. The same can be said for feedback.

I've been drawn to how teacher response might fail for a while now. I've been interested in how response might fail in/through its production, circulation, and reception since I wrote about it in my thesis ten years ago. I remember reading Allison D. Carr's (2013) "In Support of Failure" and making connections between her good work and research on writing assessment and teacher

response. Carr's description of failure as an "affect-bearing concept" and how failure *feels* and what that feeling *does* were significant to my understandings of failure through teacher response. In this chapter, I recommend we theorize, examine, and engage in conversations around how teacher response might *fail* and how we can address that failure with students in writing classrooms.

FROM GRADES TO (RE)EXAMINING RESPONSE

Higher education has a long, complicated history in the United States. Colleges were designed to exclude students based on race, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status. Universities were created to privilege white, abled-bodied upper-class men. Admission and grading are examples of institutional tools that have been used to exclude students going back to Harvard in 1636. But we only have to look back sixty years to see how admission standards were still being used to keep students like James Meredith out of the university. Meredith became the first Black student to attend the University of Mississippi in 1962 (after being denied admission). Exclusionary institutional practices designed to keep some students out are still with us. Look no further than recent attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion in states like Texas and Florida.

I'm wary of how secondary and post-secondary institutions celebrate national rankings, state rankings, acceptance rates and standards, ACT/SAT scores, GPA scores, retention, AP classes. What's this saying? Isn't this an old narrative repackaged with different words? While institutions advertise these as measurements and markers of "success," I see them as modern-day markers of exclusion. These tools won't go away in higher education either. They might evolve and be refashioned, but they won't disappear. Education is built on the dichotomy of success and failure. Success is good. Failure is bad. Grades and traditional writing assessment practices reinforce that. Students are taught *not to fail* as opposed to seeing failure as *necessary for learning*. In kindergarten, students are rewarded (or punished) by gold stars, stickers, and grades.

Grades are powerful institutional tools that have been carefully integrated into various aspects of higher education. They complement the consumeristic and capitalistic nature of higher education in the United States. Grades function as a technology of surveillance (Johnson, 2021). They serve the university and reinforce hierarchies. Students are "allowed into" a major or class based on GPA and prerequisites. Scholarships are "given" or "taken away" based on grades. Schools threaten students with expulsion for poor performance as if receiving an F letter grade isn't devastating enough to morale. Institutions have created a system where students desire grades, and teachers are required to give them. Writing teachers have to provide a final letter grade whether we want to or not.

Alternative writing assessment practices, like grading contracts and ungrading, have become more popular over the last decade in writing studies. But the truth is, we're *still* grading (Fernandes et al., 2023). Maggie Fernandes, Emily Brier, and Megan McIntyre (2023) argue against using "the language of ungrading" altogether because it "misrepresents how students experience our courses" and "flattens the critiques of normative and oppressive writing assessment" (p. 148-149). We need to be honest with our students about classroom assessment. Grades are a part of writing classrooms. Teachers give grades, eventually. We should critique the problematic nature and institutional power of grades while also acknowledging how students might desire grades (Inman & Powell, 2018). There's no easy answer when it comes to writing assessment. In writing classrooms, grades tend to be used to judge language by a standard. Traditional grading based on writing "quality" often encourages students to adopt "standardized" English. Standardized English has been socially and culturally constructed to mean "good" writing in the United States. Students are disproportionately affected by these norms, especially marginalized students.

Some teachers might say grades are a form of feedback. While I understand that grades might communicate progress (or lack thereof), I would argue that teacher response should be separated from grading altogether in traditional and alternative writing assessment ecologies. I acknowledge this might be difficult, given the institution's fixation on grades and how students are conditioned to value them. It requires conversations with students about the purpose of teacher response. It might mean delaying the distribution of a letter grade until after students have reflected on feedback. This might seem too idealistic. I want to acknowledge teachers in precarious positions that might make this more difficult. There are already time constraints and institutional inequities being an adjunct, graduate teaching assistant, and non-tenure track faculty. I'm cognizant of 4/4 and 5/5 teaching loads every semester. Feedback takes a lot of time, and when you're teaching 100-125 students each semester, there's not a lot of time to give.

I also want to recognize that students are in a precarious position. It's difficult to persuade students in sixteen weeks not to desire grades after always receiving them and still receiving them in other classes. Students have a history with grades and feedback being produced and distributed at the same time, sometimes on the same page. It's safe to assume that decoupling the interconnectivity of grades and response might be challenging for teachers and students. Teacher response sits in a gray area between teacher and student, rubric and grade, institution and classroom. Unlike grades, which are mostly concrete and stable (A: 90-100; B: 80-89; C: 70-79; D: 60-69; F: 59 and below), feedback is fluid and dynamic. It's clear that feedback is also more student-centered in that it provides individualized direction to student writing. Feedback informs and guides the

writer. When teachers respond to students, they're not just responding to writing; they're responding to a *writer*.

In this chapter, I offer a rendering of an ecology of response that indicates how feedback doesn't work in isolation but rather is informed and situated within and between various systems, activities, and structures. I do this so we might consider different points of origin failure can take through teacher response. It's important not to oversimplify teacher response or failure. Teacher response doesn't just fail because a teacher said something wrong, for example. I believe it's more nuanced than that. I introduce *feedback failure theory* to help us investigate teacher response more closely. Feedback failure theory looks closely at *production* and *perception*, or how teacher response gets produced and perceived. My hope is to peel back the layers of how response might fail or pinpoint moments where failure becomes embodied through feedback. I conclude with a description of a pedagogical practice that allows teachers and students to focus on how feedback somehow misses the mark, or fails, at least some of the time. Doing so resists ideas that attach failure to students and/or student writing. My hope is to alleviate the pressures and burdens students carry when it comes to writing and assessment and to create opportunities for more productive conversations to happen around feedback and failure.

ECOLOGY OF TEACHER RESPONSE

There's a rich history in writing studies on the purposes of teacher response (Sommers, 1982; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1982; Anson, 1989; Straub, 1996). One throughline in this scholarship is that teacher response should support student agency and encourage students to further engage in the writing process. Nancy Sommers (2013) calls feedback the "most enduring form of communication" teachers have with students (xi). Responding to writing is personal, Chris Anson (1989) acknowledges that feedback is "often difficult and tense" (p. 2). Different moments in the writing process call for different kinds of responses. David Green Jr. (2016) shares, "The evaluation of student writing, thus, is a complex negotiation driven by institutional context and teacher knowledge, both of which are reinforced by the curricula and evaluative materials developed and implemented by writing programs" (152). There are different stakeholders and objectives that inform writing courses, pedagogies, student learning outcomes, assignments, and assessments.

There are larger institutional aims and even state policies that shape first-year writing classes. Most first-year writing classes, for instance, are tied to general education curriculum and/or general education programs. General education curriculum often identifies specific outcomes first-year writing courses need to meet to fulfill university requirements (e.g., writing communication). Any examination of teacher response shouldn't *just* focus on the act of providing

feedback to student writing. There's too much informing that interaction, too much between that act of communication. Each local context consists of different systems, structures, policies, assignments, expectations, goals, and outcomes.

I say this to emphasize how teacher response is locally situated and never in isolation. Anson (2000) challenges teachers to become more "reflective of the conditions, nature, and sources of their response to error in students' texts" (p. 17). How do we increase our awareness of institutional conditions, systems, and structures? How do we become more reflective of how cultural and social biases might shape response practices? How do we reconcile programmatic outcomes and policies with our own pedagogies and values when it comes to providing feedback?

To me, this starts with an understanding of an *ecology of teacher response* see Figure 3.1, which helps demonstrate some of the elements and forces in the ecology of response). Mya Poe, Asao B. Inoue, and Norbert Elliot (2019) write:

> We insist that writing assessment must be understood within an ecological framework. Because our metaphors structure our conceptual systems, ecological realities and the rhetorical framework used to describe them are necessary to displace elementalist notions of process and product. (p. 4)

We should map institutional norms and conditions and acknowledge policies and practices that shape response genres, such as marginal comments and end comments. Most importantly, we should take into account students' histories and memories with different response genres. Through mapping an ecology of teacher response and listening to our students, we can think more critically about how teacher response might fail or how failure might be embodied through teacher response. We can investigate how feedback is situated in classrooms and institutions that already fail students because judgments of language are never neutral.

Genres are ideological (Devitt, 2004). Response genres, like marginal comments, carry meaning and value to student writing–they offer ways of knowing, seeing, understanding, revising. These genres of response circulate in a much larger activity system. There's a recurring situation that facilitates teacher response: Teachers assign writing, students write, and teachers provide feedback. This situation occurs across writing classrooms.

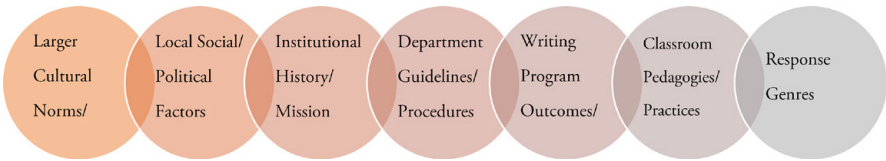

Figure 3.1. Ecology of teacher response.

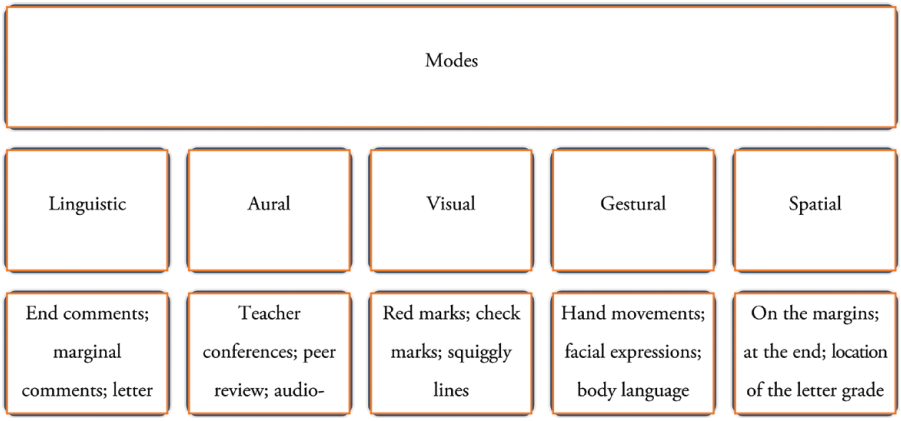

Figure 3.2. Modes and examples of response.

In addition to acknowledging how these elements inform response through its production, distribution, circulation, interpretation, and interaction with students, feedback needs to be understood through its modalities as well. Modes and mediums, of course, are never neutral. Power is situated in the tools and technologies we use to respond to student writing and is laced with values and beliefs that advantage some students and disadvantage others. For example, consider how recording audio feedback on Canvas or Blackboard without a transcript to supplement the audio is less accessible for students with auditory processing disabilities. The technology affects the production, perception, and meaning-making of the teacher's response.

Figure 3.2 helps situate how teacher response can be distributed through various modes of communication. It ties the five modes from the New London Group to specific examples of feedback. Of course, teacher response takes different forms and tones, as well.

For example, some responses might be informal, whereas others might be more formal. Some might be constructive or formative or summative. Some are from peer-to-peer, while others are teacher-to-student. Teachers can use multiple forms of feedback—end comments and marginal comments, for example—on any given assignment. Response scholarship has characterized feedback in several ways: Directive, facilitative, authoritative, collaborative, intentional, reflective, reader-based, student-centered.

Response comes at various stages of the writing process, too. For example, feedback on an earlier draft of student writing might ask for substantial content-based changes, whereas feedback on a later draft might be more concerned with stylistic elements of writing. Sommers (1982) suggests that it's "necessary for us to offer assistance to student writers when they are in the process of

composing a text," and without feedback, "students assume that their writing has communicated their meaning and perceive no need for revising the substance of their text" (p. 149). C. H. Knoblauch and Lil Brannon (1981) write that response is designed to "dramatize the presence of a reader who depends on the writer's choices in order to perceive the intent of the discourse" (p. 1). Teacher response draws attention to the writing process and increases awareness of possible concerns within writing, like issues with organization, development, and focus. I feel like we should consider not only what teacher response does or when and where response happens in the writing process but also what's less visible through teacher response. It's important to examine what informs response and how response comes to be, why some modes might be more advantageous than others, and how to communicate these ecological nuances with students.

After all, when a teacher responds, they make their voice visible on the page. It's seen. It's heard. It's felt by students. If the text is a representation of the student, feedback reflects the teacher. But what about the things that shape that voice in the margins? Teacher response most certainly represents how a teacher experiences a text. But it does more than offer insight on an experience. Teacher response communicates values and beliefs about how a student chooses to language. Our readings and responses to student writing are shaped by who we are, where we are, our attitudes on language (Young, 2010), perceptions on error (Williams, 1981), thoughts about rhetorical moves in writing, our histories and memories with language, including how we've been trained to read and respond to student writing and how we've received feedback in the past on our own writing. Those are a few things that inform our reading and understanding and how we respond to student writing.

As much as we might attempt to decentralize our presence in the classroom through certain pedagogies (e.g., critical, collaborative), it's difficult to deconstruct ourselves with teacher response. Students have complicated histories with feedback that asserted and reaffirmed how much our perspective matters as teachers, especially when it comes to judging language and grading writing. We can deemphasize the letter grade through alternative classroom assessments. It seems counterproductive to deemphasize feedback. Response has always been valuable to teaching writing because it offers an opportunity to promote and encourage student agency. Feedback can support students' ability to make decisions about their writing: "To deny students any attributes of agency in making such choices is to deny them any right or responsibility for such choices, and so to discourage their investment in their writing" (Horner, 1992, p. 189). Later in this chapter, I describe an activity rooted in student agency and negotiation centered on teacher response.

In its simplest form, feedback, as defined by Darci L. Thoune (2020), "references the information you receive on a performance, activity, or action" (p.

53-54). We might consider how our response practices ought to complement our assessment values and ecologies (Wood, 2020). In some ways, this invites teachers to consider not only how their assessments align but also how response genres might fail students: "Genres have the power to help or hurt human interaction, to ease communication or to deceive, to enable someone to speak or to discourage someone from saying something different" (Devitt, 2004, p. 1). I think we need a pedagogy of response to help us investigate and better understand the nuances of response and failure. Something that can help us talk about teacher response and failure with students.

A PEDAGOGY OF TEACHER RESPONSE IN FIRST-YEAR WRITING

Perhaps the easiest thing to do might be to think about teacher response as complementary to pedagogy and to see whether response is *failing* to confirm what we believe to be true about writing and the teaching of writing. It might be beneficial to think about how response either complements or contradicts pedagogical values as we consider the ecology of teacher response (see Figure 3.1). For example, what does it look like to embody antiracism through responding to student writing if a teacher draws from social justice-oriented pedagogies? What does it look like to complement antiracist writing assessment ecologies with teacher response? Or what does it mean to enact response through disability studies and universal design for learning? At the heart of these questions is this: How do our pedagogies account for response, or vice versa? It seems like our pedagogical values should indeed influence the ways we respond to student writing.

A pedagogy of teacher response feels productive in helping us understand these nuances, especially since we spend so much time responding to student writing. Likewise, a framework that helps us associate failure not with students but with the production and perception of teacher response feels useful. Conversations with students about how we're always learning and growing as teachers from failure seem important. Judy Segal (1996) suggests that we need "accounts of failure, particularly accounts which might be theorized" (p. 189). In "Pedagogies of Decentering and a Discourse of Failure," Segal forms a taxonomy of responses to failure by theorizing her failed decentered classroom, and she concludes that "to complement accounts of success, which *are* available, we need accounts of failure, particularly accounts which might be theorized to be productive of strategies of amelioration" (p. 189). Like Segal notes, I think we need accounts of failure. In particular, I think we need to share when and how failure might exist through teacher response, and we need to demonstrate healthy dialogues about it. Productive conversations that help us understand failure, not run from it.

It seems valuable to connect feedback and failure, given students' experiences and attitudes with writing: "Many first-year college writers have a fear of writing, a fear of failure" (Price, 1997, p. 1). It might help to remember that many first-year writing students are unfamiliar with systems and structures of higher education. This is a new, unfamiliar space. More traditional first-year students are attempting to adjust to a context much different than K-12. There's not as much in-class time and definitely less familiarity with their teachers and peers. Meanwhile, adult learners in first-year composition have their own challenges to overcome. While adapting to this environment, students usually take first-year writing during their first semester in college. Carol Price, echoing Kenneth Bruffee's (1980) assertion that language is tied to identity, writes that students "are afraid to try to put their thoughts onto paper and expose their inadequacies" (p. 1). Price suggests that we have a pedagogical responsibility to teach self-confidence and help students overcome the fear of failure.

What better way to teach confidence than to model to students productive ways to talk about failure, like how teacher response—our own approaches, practices, and habits—might fail. Or how the ecology of response might cause and/or create failure. We can redirect failure away from student writing.

Segal (1996) encourages us to conduct a "structural analysis of failure applying a social-action theory of genre" (p. 176). This allows us to have some concrete language and a shared understanding of how we're analyzing failure. It also demystifies failure, which can complement pedagogical values in alternative classroom assessment practices, like using labor-based grading contracts to decrease the subjectivity of assessing writing (Inoue, 2022). Segal doesn't theorize failure, but she does write about the importance of "good theory." Theory does more than name a concept. It describes the nature of something and provides an explanation of its application. There's opportunity at this moment in time to theorize, conceptualize, question, and unsettle teacher response. I offer *feedback failure theory* to help us do this work.

FEEDBACK FAILURE THEORY

While writing teachers have various approaches to teaching, it remains true that at least one practice unites us all—responding to student writing. If there's one common denominator, even in writing classrooms that use newer classroom assessment models like labor-based grading contracts, it's that teachers read and respond to student writing. Responses can take various forms: marginal comments, end comments, one-on-one conferences, rubrics, audio feedback, feedback in learning management systems (LMS), using screencasting technologies. There's no denying that students have certain attitudes, reactions, and emotional responses to teacher

response (Calhoon-Dillahunt & Forrest, 2013; Treglia, 2008). What can we learn from the potential for feedback to *fail our students and even ourselves*?

Since writing is such a vulnerable activity, it makes sense that teacher response affects students, and there are implications for our practices. Writers share their identities and thoughts on a page, and they give them to us to provide feedback. It makes sense that genres of response, such as marginal comments and end comments, might have consequences. In other words, feedback might fail to do what we want it to do, or it might be informed by inequitable policies that shape our response practices. I'm mindful of the peculiarity of failure, too, like how failure doesn't get embodied equally and doesn't take one singular shape. If anything, failure is experiential, unique, and highly individualized, much like student writing.

I offer *feedback failure theory* as a means for teachers and students to explore and investigate how teacher response might fail based on its *production* and *perception*. The goal is to make more visible how teacher response somehow misses the mark, or fails, at least some of the time. Feedback failure theory might help demystify how we respond to student writing and, at the very least, indicate how failure might exist in the systems, structures, and larger ecology of teacher response.

Production

The first part of feedback failure theory examines how feedback is being produced and how the production of feedback can act as failure. The production of feedback is clearly a key component in composition classrooms due to the amount of student writing and revising that is happening over the course of a semester. We might look back at the ecology of response (see Figure 3.1) to understand various elements that might affect feedback production. In doing so, we could ask ourselves questions about the nature of that production. For example, do we consider how our program outcomes might inform what we value and what we say in our response to student writing? Or, to revisit something I mentioned earlier, do we think about how our pedagogies ought to complement our responses? Or maybe how our feedback might be sending contradictory messages to students about those pedagogical values? This is a conversation we could have with students, too. I'm thinking specifically about how a teacher might be committed to antiracism and social justice in first-year writing yet still assess some "standardized" form of English or grammatical errors because of other factors in the university, such as general education learning outcomes. Additionally, the English program or writing program might have outcomes or use other assessment genres, such as rubrics, that value standard academic English and/or call attention to a specific kind of academic languaging. These rubrics, then, are used to assess student writing, which can influence what a teacher comments on.

In the mid- to late 1990s, compositionists explored the nature and tonality of response and encouraged more conversational practices. For example, Peter Elbow (n.d.) shares his response habits, "I write my comments on a separate sheet not only because I'm quicker and neater on my computer, but also because this method makes me comment as a reader about how the writing is affecting me rather than as an editor trying to fix the text" ("About Responding to Student Writing," n.p.). In 1996, Richard Straub argues that "conversational" feedback should employ "calls for revision" and push "the writer to engage in richer pursuits of meaning" (1996b, p. 385). In another article, Straub (1996a) indicates that there's still a problem in understanding the nature of feedback and the purposes for providing feedback. One problem that Straub acknowledges in the production of feedback is the appropriation of student writing. He argues that teachers "should not 'appropriate' student texts by overlooking their purposes for writing and emphasizing our purposes for commenting" (p. 223). Then, Straub concludes that teachers "should be 'facilitative,' providing feedback and support but not dictating the path of revision" (p. 223). Straub's argument and conclusion support a reality—feedback can fail. Though, it doesn't necessarily address the nature of failure through feedback.

Summer Smith (1997) explains how feedback can fail due to its "genre." She examines end comments: "The stability of the genre—the very feature that makes end comments recognizable and, perhaps easier to write—may also reduce the educational effectiveness of the comment" (Smith, 1997, p. 266). Smith writes that teachers establish a "pattern of response" and "history of practice" when forming feedback in part because of institutional power and student expectations. She writes that institutions assert power over teacher feedback to student writing "by determining the focus of the teacher's curriculum, by rewarding or not rewarding the teacher for pedagogical innovations, and, in many cases, by requiring that the teacher return papers with comments within a specified period of time" (Smith, 1997, p. 250). Smith also acknowledges that student expectations play a part in feedback: "The teacher may fear authority challenges from aggressive students who receive poor grades or who oppose the teacher's views on writing" (p. 250). This attention to the production and perception of response is at the heart of feedback failure theory.

The way in which an instructor produces their feedback, in some part, influences whether the student perceives feedback as failure. We can be assured our comments affect our students' attitudes about themselves and their writing. The production of feedback, then, is an essential aspect of understanding how feedback may fail and/or how students might experience failure. Given the larger institutional system under which we work as teachers, we need to think more about how these assessment structures are affecting our production and distribution of feedback.

For example, most universities require that teachers give an end-of-semester letter grade. Traditional grading—giving an "A" or "B" or "C"—on student writing is still the most common assessment method in first-year writing, even though there's been more attention to alternatives over the last decade. If our responses to student writing work under this more traditional hierarchical grading system, then it changes the way we produce feedback. For example, do we see our feedback as a complement to the letter grades we give? Are our responses a justification or a rationale for this summative assessment—the grade? Should they be under this system?

Since letter grades have been problematized in relation to learning and motivation, it might benefit writing teachers who choose to give grades on writing to wait on the production and distribution of the grade itself. For example, under this assessment structure, it seems more beneficial to give feedback to students, and perhaps provide opportunities for revision and reflection, and then assign a letter grade a week later. This would elicit more engagement and response from students—they might read the feedback as opposed to looking for the letter grade. Now, one could argue that feedback is produced through the drafting stages before assigning a letter grade on the final draft. But that brings up a different question: Is there a conflicting message being sent by the production of feedback that, at first, doesn't assign a grade and then, ultimately, produces a grade on student writing? The same conflicting message could be said about feedback on final drafts that include a grade and offer paths for revision, especially if students aren't given the chance to revise or expected to revise.

If teacher response complements the larger classroom assessment ecology and a teacher's pedagogical values, then more than likely, there's going to be less conflict and fewer mixed messages. We might mitigate conflict by seeing how response practices work alongside classroom assessment. In the 1990s, there was an emphasis on portfolios as better representations of writing and pedagogical values, such as writing-as-process, metacognition, and revision. Portfolios as a model for classroom assessment helped complement the belief that measuring multiple written performances is more reliable and valid when assessing student writing. It's possible that classroom assessment could lead to teacher response failing through its production.

Teacher response itself can send contradictory messages, too. Nancy Sommers (1982) communicates that students are "commanded to edit a sentence to avoid an error or to condense a sentence to achieve greater brevity of style, and then told in the margins that the particular paragraph needs to be more specific or developed more" (p. 150). An instructor's annotations could be contradictory by asking a student to fix grammatical errors in one paragraph while asking them to refocus on the content in another: "These different signals given to students, to edit and develop, to condense and elaborate, represent also the failure of

teachers' comments to direct genuine revision of the text as a whole" (Sommers, 1982, p. 150-151). This shows how the production of feedback might fail based on what's being said and what students are being asked to do. We might ask ourselves what this means about how students perceive and take up feedback.

For example, is it reasonable to assume that students will be able to negotiate those contradictory messages successfully? It's possible that this failure in feedback also makes students' writing worse. As Sommers (1982) notes, these comments "take the students' attention away from their own original purposes . . . too often revision becomes a balancing act for students in which they make the changes that are requested but do not take the risk of changing anything that was not commented on" (p. 151). Thus, feedback also fails based on whether student agency is removed.

The production of feedback could result in failure based on how a teacher approaches student writing, as well. As Joseph M. Williams (1981) notes, our approach to writing is critical in gauging how feedback will be produced. Williams begs the question of how our expectations for error in student writing act as failure. In many ways, it demonstrates carelessness. We fail students when we don't approach their writing in a spirit of goodwill and eagerness to read and learn. Williams challenges teachers to think more about how we read other texts, such as books, journals, and newspapers, and to approach student writing the same way. Feedback can fail in its production if it's not taken up with intentionality. One way we can potentially avoid failure is to be diligent in how we approach teacher response to student writing and to slow down. Recently, Timothy Oleksiak (2021) coined "slow peer review," which draws on rhetorical feminism. Oleksiak asks teachers to consider how peer review can encourage "students to think more deliberately about inclusivity, accountability, and the consequences of their writing" (p. 370). Likewise, I believe teachers can model this intentionality and compassion through their own response practices.

If we slow down and think more about whether we're approaching student writing with preconceived notions of what "errors" or "failures" we might find, then ideally, this awareness moves us toward more productive feedback that centers students. As others have said, one of the main purposes of feedback is to provide thoughtful commentary that promotes student agency. Thus, feedback facilitates paths that support the student's ability to choose what should or should not be revised in their writing. Teacher response is secondary. Even though teachers spend a significant amount of time producing feedback, we should realize it's not the most important thing. A student's purpose for writing is more important than our comments. To that end, feedback is complementary and should be produced in ways that don't dominate or subtract from student agency. Bruce Horner (1992) writes that teachers should be focused on reinforcing and reaffirming to students

that they have power and agency over their own writing. And by inserting our own agendas as teachers through feedback, we remove student agency and discourage them from being invested in our writing classrooms.

This echoes what Straub (1996b) says when he talks about how feedback should facilitate—*not dictate*—paths of revision. The line between productive and nonproductive feedback feels narrow, but most writing teachers agree that a more conversational, probing, facilitative tone that helps support student agency is effective. That doesn't necessarily mean there's not failure through response, which is why I suggest looking at the *perception* of feedback, too.

Perception

The second part of feedback failure theory focuses on how response is perceived by teachers and students and how that could lead to other kinds of failures. In 1972, Thomas C. Gee writes, "In marking papers, English teachers are aware that their comments do affect students. The students' reactions are sometimes quite different from those that the teacher had expected or hoped for" (p. 38). We can understand how feedback affects students by considering how Carr (2013) talks about failure as an "affect-bearing concept" and how failure isolates students. When a student thinks they have failed or feels failure, there's social and emotional implications. This feedback changes how they see themselves, their writing, the classroom, their peers, their teacher. Carr writes, "'failure' (little f) becomes 'Failure' (big f) in our classrooms, the most extensive system of socialization available in the modern world. We are all inculcated into this reductive, do-or-die paradigm. We are *entrenched*" (n.p.).

Failure can exist through teacher perception of student writing and student interpretation and reaction to feedback. Gee (1972) writes, "Students often interpret a marginal notation like *clumsy*, *poorly written*, or *illogical* as personal indictment or as almost total disparagement of their skills. A student who receives no marks may interpret the dearth of comments as a subtle way of telling him that his paper was so bland, so unworthy as to merit no comment" (p. 38). We have a responsibility as teachers to understand how response might be perceived and how students might feel or react to feedback. A marginal comment like "illogical" could be perceived as a personal indictment, which produces the psychological feeling of failure. Carr (2013) explains how academic failures could produce the feeling of shame: "Shame acknowledges the failure, and in so doing, names the failure *as failure*, causing us to feel isolation while making us painfully aware of our relationality" (n.p.). The feeling of failure and shame as it's related to writing is connected to how we perceive ourselves as writers. There's no doubt that feedback has power to produce affect that embodies failure.

Erica Reynolds (2003) writes about the role of self-efficacy in writing and connects assessment to self-efficacy by encouraging Directed Self Placement (DSP), a writing program placement model that allows students to place themselves in a first-year writing course. Reynolds reveals the correlation between writing assessment/feedback and self-efficacy and addresses the "psychological variables that are related to writing skills and performance" (p. 79). Reynolds acknowledges that writing self-efficacy was "significantly related with written performance" (p. 79). I recommend a simple, reflective in-class activity that generates good conversations about feedback, failure, and affect. On the first day of class, I ask my first-year writing students: How many of you have received feedback that has made you *feel* like a failure? All of them raise their hands. I never have to explain what that type of feedback looks like (e.g., overwhelming comments, red marks, question marks, crossed-out sentences). The students perceive feedback and translate it into their abilities as a writer, or even their abilities as a person and learner. This perception and feeling seems to be universal among students.

The kind of reflective in-class activity I do with students helps us investigate these previous feelings of failure through feedback, or how receiving feedback curates an affective response. There's a range of affective responses that might occur when we receive feedback, right? I use this in-class activity to illuminate other emotions and responses to feedback as well, experiences we might perceive to be more positive. For example, I ask students to reflect and share experiences with teacher response that helped create a sense of pride in their writing. Feedback failure theory isn't just about identifying failure, then. It's about understanding the nature of teacher response and demystifying various productions and perceptions of feedback.

As teachers, some of this happens if we consider our own perceptions of student writing. Since the feeling of failure is highly individualized based on the relationship between a teacher and student, it's beneficial for us to reflect on our own biases. Paul Diederich (1974) writes about this: "There are even particular types of errors to which some teachers react so strongly that they are likely to fail any paper in which they appear, no matter how good it is in any other respects" (p. 11). Diederich adds that bias "appears most obviously when a teacher is grading his own students, knowing who wrote them" (p. 11). In my writing class, I have conversations with students about my own biases when it comes to response. I share with students, for example, that I don't pay much attention to grammar and mechanics, but I do focus on how they analyze a text and develop evidence for a claim. My perception of these rhetorical moves impacts how (and what) I choose to respond to, including how the tone of my feedback might change.

This metacognitive awareness and these conversations with students are helpful. As readers and responders, we're trying to make meaning of a student's

text. It's impossible to set aside our biases and preferences for what writing is and does or what it should be or look like. And while *error* has been the subject of teacher response scholarship for a while, I feel as though conversations around error are often positioned in relation to error in student writing and not teacher biases and perceptions of writing. Gee writes about students' responses to teacher comments in 1972, and Straub studies students' reactions in 1997. I appreciate this work, in part, because it centers students' interpretations and perceptions of feedback—and I like how Straub (1997) understands that "the particular context has an effect on how students view teacher response" (p. 113). We need more work on how teachers respond within individual contexts and how students are perceiving and taking up these comments.

Even more so, we need to see how our responses reflect relationships with students and not merely contexts. For example, how do our comments change from Student Y to Student Z on the same writing assignment? This is where feedback failure theory can help because it allows us to see how each student is perceiving and reflecting on response. It provides an opportunity for teachers to better produce feedback with each student in mind and for conversations to happen around failure through feedback production and/or perception. Carr (2013) writes, "We can only become better writers when we acknowledge that writing is a process, that we all make mistakes; denying this reality is futile and reduces a fundamental human experience—expression—to a matter of skills, technicalities, or—worse—a matter of inborn genius" (n.p.). Likewise, I believe we can only become better, more thoughtful and compassionate, responders when we acknowledge that feedback is a process and that we're all capable of making mistakes. And that response is part of a larger ecology that has systems and structures with embedded ideologies and values that can hurt or help teachers and students.

APPLYING FEEDBACK FAILURE THEORY

How we talk with students about feedback can help demystify our response practices and help students better understand the ways response gets produced and perceived. These conversations can be relational and can help build community in classrooms because the feeling of failure through response is something we've all experienced. If we share that we've felt failure through feedback, our students will know they aren't alone. They'll know that teachers and scholars are affected by feedback in negative ways, too. They'll see that feedback is not infallible, including the feedback we give them. If we admit to our students that we are capable of producing failure through our feedback, then our students are, more often than not, going to give us the benefit of the doubt. This models transparency and opens space for honest communication about feedback and failure.

Feedback can be seen as a *negotiation* between teacher and student. I find it necessary to echo Thoune's (2020) attention to identity and vulnerability when talking about failure before I share how to apply feedback failure theory through negotiation:

> Because universities, including writing classrooms, are spaces that replicate and often reinforce systems of privilege and oppression, asking students and instructors to make themselves vulnerable and to reflect on their failure(s) may not always work or be appropriate. (p. 60)

We have to consider our positionalities when we share failure or write about failure or talk about failure with students (and others). Since I'm suggesting how feedback failure can be negotiated, I want to make clear that not everyone has the same access nor the same power to negotiate. I want to acknowledge some identities do not have the privilege to negotiate because of the inequities that pervade systems and structures, both institutionally and culturally. Therefore, I suggest negotiation while recognizing that, for some teachers, negotiation might cause further marginalization, so negotiation isn't even a possibility.

I draw on Bruce Horner's (1992) framework for negotiation because he pays close attention to how feedback has the power to foster or discourage student agency, and he makes more visible the sociality of "error" and its implications. If we start with an understanding that failure is socially constructed and that in student writing, "error" is a "flawed social transaction," then we can see "failure on the part of *both* the writer and reader to negotiate an agreement" (Horner, 1992, p. 174). Acknowledging our responses to student writing—this exchange between us and students—as a social agreement is important for us to see how feedback can be negotiated. In short, it's resisting a "right" and "wrong" binary that teachers are pressured to adopt almost inherently when responding to student writing because of grades and classroom assessment that inform our response practices.

I suggest we see feedback as a *first draft*. Teacher response is an attempt to work towards agreement with students. This indicates that feedback is not final; feedback is a process and is a part of the writing process. Feedback is not a concrete exchange of communication where students better take up comments or else there are consequences (which is fear driven), but instead the first step to a more open dialogue. The tonality of our feedback can shape its perception, of course, but I'm not talking about changing just our tone. I'm suggesting something much more than that. I'm arguing for a reorientation of how we see teacher response through failure and how we can present feedback as negotiable.

One thing this does for sure is challenge traditional response practices that associate failure with student writing. These practices focus on "error" in student writing and mark grammar, syntax, mechanics, spelling, punctuation. I'm

recommending the opposite by linking teacher response to failure and asking us to consider how any kind of response might fail. For example, a teacher might make a marginal comment that asks a student to further develop their main claim or suggests using more evidence to support an idea or to revise their thesis statement. These comments might come across as questions in the margins. They might feel negotiable in tonality. Do we know that? Are we sure students feel agency and power through these responses? Even in our best efforts as teachers and responders, we don't know what responses feel negotiable or feel like failure to students.

When we respond, we facilitate revision. And facilitating revision should be an act of compromise between teachers and students. Negotiation is two sides coming together to form some sort of agreement. In regards to feedback, both the instructor and the student have to be willing to compromise. Horner (1992) writes, "Teachers who fail to acknowledge the power of their students likewise reject the opportunity of negotiating with them, and so, however indirectly, reject their own power and agency as well" (p. 176). Like Horner, most of us would probably agree that both the reader and writer "hold a degree of power and authority" (p. 175). Since feedback is based on at least two characteristics, production and perception, then negotiation should be the central balance between teacher and student. Negotiation, like feedback, is an act of communication.

Touching back on Paul Cook's compelling arguments (this volume), the heart of negotiation isn't about winning. That said, it would be naive not to acknowledge how United States cultural values and beliefs might say the opposite (e.g., via capitalism, profit, consumerism). Negotiation is dialogic. The aim is mutual interest. To me, listening is at the core of negotiation and the goal is to learn something through that dialogue. Horner agrees that negotiation "is not a matter of one party persuading a second to adopt the position of the first, nor a process of exchange (barter) between two parties, but a process of joint change and learning in which power operates dialectically" (p. 175). There are a couple of ways teachers can apply feedback failure theory after having conversations with students about what feedback failure theory is and how it can better help us understand response: one-on-one conferences and reflective writing.

One-on-One Conferences

Teachers could meet with each student to discuss their feedback for ten to fifteen minutes. I realize not everyone has the same opportunity to do this, though. For example, a teacher with a 4/4 or 5/5 teaching load with 20-25 students in each class would not be able to do this as effectively (or sustainably) given the amount of time, energy, and labor involved in this process. One-on-one conferences represent a dialogue between two people. They make visible that there are two

parties; both have something to say. With feedback failure theory, of course, the conversation would be about the production and perception of teacher response. Having this vocabulary for feedback failure theory and embracing a pedagogy that centers teacher response is important because there's a shared vocabulary that can help start the conversation; there's a shared sense of understanding as to what we're talking about and why.

In this situation, I recommend teachers consider their positionality and the physical space itself. Institutions are hierarchical, of course. And based on current systems and structures within institutions, we know teachers have more power than students (e.g., in terms of course outcomes, classroom policies, grading standards). It might be beneficial for teachers to acknowledge this institutional power as a way of surrendering it and communicating how they desire a shared, co-equal conversation about response. Likewise, this also means teachers might reconsider where this conversation happens. As opposed to meeting in the teacher's office, which could be perceived as another sign of institutional power and imbalance between teacher and student, maybe meeting in a more neutral location, like the library or student union, would be better. The goal is to talk about feedback through a more critical lens, whether that be in a teacher's office or public-facing space.

I start these one-on-one conferences by focusing on *perception*. I became disenchanted with these meetings at first because it felt like I was taking up the space with questions and ideas. I was leading the conversation too much. It felt unbalanced. It didn't feel dialogic. I started asking students to reflect on my feedback and write questions and concerns. I asked them to bring those reflections to our one-on-one conferences. That has been a lot more productive. First, I ask students to write down their immediate emotional reactions after receiving my feedback. I think that helps capture the affective nature of response. I also encourage students to identify specific comments in the margins so we can talk more about them, whether there was a positive or negative reaction to it. The goal is to have open communication about feedback and for me to listen and better understand who I'm responding to. I see this as another way to build and cultivate a relationship. I want to have a transparent, honest conversation about my own response practices.

To me, negotiation is about releasing power. After we talk about how they perceived my feedback, how my responses made them feel, I can share how I approached their writing. I can talk about where those comments came from, including what I was thinking as I wrote a specific marginal comment they pointed to. This part of the conversation is all about the production of feedback. I am demystifying the production of my response practices. I am also reflecting and thinking critically about possible errors I made in that process. I try to help students understand what was going on. I try to paint a picture of where I was sitting and writing, what I was doing and whether there were any distractions,

what music I was listening to, etc. Maybe I was writing feedback thoughtlessly, making rubber stamp comments that didn't feel like I was commenting to a real individual writer. Maybe they were too generic or too abstract. This is a chance for me to engage in self-reflection to see whether I was being informed and influenced by other elements in the response ecology (see Figure 3.1).

After we engage in conversations about feedback failure theory, we discuss how my feedback has or has not failed. These are productive conversations. A lot of the time, students don't have any issues with my feedback. There's not a negative emotional response or reaction that embodies failure. With that said, these conversations are still incredibly helpful to both of us. Because it's all about creating an open space to share and reflect on response, to deconstruct power and privilege within academic systems and structures, to demystify feedback, and to learn more about each other as writers and humans.

Reflective Writing

Teachers don't have to schedule one-on-one conferences to discuss their feedback with students, especially given time constraints. It's also more accessible and accommodating to not ask students to meet face-to-face. Therefore, the second way to apply feedback failure theory is to strategically build into the curriculum reflective writing assignments that ask students to write about teacher response and submit it as part of the writing process. This could be more useful (and less stressful) for students and teachers. After receiving feedback, each student could write a letter to their teacher sharing how their feedback made them feel and what they are taking away. Students could talk about what responses are most beneficial to them. They could share which ones feel productive and which ones don't. They could describe how they are going to take up the feedback to revise and why they are choosing to take up some suggestions and ignore others. Some of us might already be doing something similar in our writing classes, especially ones that center on reflection, revision, and metacognition.

The difference here is that there's a focus on the production and perception of feedback not just how students are going to revise based on comments. Students would spend more time focusing on affect and emotion. They would spend more time sharing their feelings and talking about their perception of specific marginal comments. And again, there would be a true sense of negotiation where the teacher is listening to students' reactions and concerns and responding. Unlike a reflective assignment where students talk about their path for revision and a teacher marks it "complete" or "incomplete," this activity would require teachers to respond. After all, the purpose is to engage in a dialogue. What might be neat here is for the teacher to read the student letter and then record an audio response

to the letter (and provide a transcript). There's something more personal and relational about hearing someone's voice. This would also complement multimodal pedagogies. In this situation, the teacher could clarify and share their thoughts about their response practices, including where and how that was happening and what other ecological elements (see Figure 3.1) might be at play.

This doesn't have to be a one-time exchange between student and teacher, either. Teachers and students can gauge whether more conversation and reflection are needed. This could turn into a larger classroom conversation with students that includes an illustration of examples from class where feedback had failed. Through conversations and negotiation, feedback failure theory allows us to investigate and examine the complex ecology of teacher response in our own local contexts. It allows us to build better relationships with students and for us to consider how each one of them might respond differently to a specific comment. We have to get to know them and keep each student in mind as we provide feedback.

CONCLUSION

Failure doesn't have to be isolating. It doesn't have to mimic how systems and structures reassert and reinforce power. It doesn't have to create distance between teachers and students. There's a lot of promise and potential for theorizing failure through teacher response. Our field values feedback more than grades because feedback teaches students about writing, intervenes as students are engaged in the writing process, and often informs what directions a student might take through their writing.

Carr (2017) writes about failure and learning: "Writing–and learning to write–involves a great deal of failure . . . failure is a significant part of the entire scene of learning" (p. 79). My hope is that writing studies stays committed to examining writing assessment practices. I hope we continue to theorize, explore, examine, and research how feedback might fail students, at least some of the time, so that we might identify failure and possibly learn something from it. And, of course, so that we might learn from our students. As a writing teacher, I want to know how my feedback doesn't hit the mark and what and how my responses can be more invitational, more productive, more compassionate.

REFERENCES

Anson, C. (1989) *Writing and response: Theory, practice, and research*. National Council of Teachers of English.

Anson, C. (2000). Response and social construction of error. *Assessing Writing, 7*(1), 5-21. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1075-2935(00)00015-5

Blum, S. D. (2020). *Ungrading: Why rating students undermines learning (and what to do instead)*. West Virginia University Press.

Bruffee, K. (1980). *A short course in writing: A practical rhetoric for composition courses, writing workshops, and tutor training programs*. Little, Brown.

Calhoon-Dillahunt, C., & Forrest, D. (2013). Conversing in marginal spaces: Developmental writers' responses to teacher comments. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College 40*(3), 230-247.

Carr, A. D. (2013). In support of failure. *Composition Forum, 27.* https://compositionforum.com/issue/27/failure.php

Carr, A. D. (2017). Failure is not an option. In C. E. Ball & D. M. Loewe (Eds.), *Bad ideas about writing* (pp. 76-81). West Virginia University Libraries.

Carr, A. D., & Micciche, L. R. (2020). *Failure pedagogies: Learning and unlearning what it means to fail*. Peter Lang.

Devitt, A. J. (2004). *Writing genres*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Diederich, P. (1974). *Measuring growth in English*. National Council of Teachers of English.

Elbow, P. (n.d.) *About responding to student writing*. https://wrd.as.uky.edu/sites/default/files/respond.pdf

Fernandes, M., Brier, E., & McIntyre, M. (2023). We're all still grading: A call for honesty in writing assessment discourse. *Composition Studies*, *51*(2), 148-153.

Gee, T. (1972). Students' responses to teacher comments. *Research in the Teaching of English* 6(2), 212-221. https://doi.org/10.58680/rte197220151

Green, D. F. (2016). Expanding the dialogue on writing assessment at HBCUs: Foundational assessment concepts and legacies of historically Black colleges and universities. *College English*, *79*(2), 152–173. https://doi.org/10.58680/ce201628811

Horner, B. (1992). Rethinking the "sociality" of error: Teaching editing a negotiation. *Rhetoric Review, 11*(1), 172-199.

Inman, J. O., & Powell, R. A. (2018). In the absence of grades: Dissonance and desire in course-contract classrooms. *College Composition and Communication*, *70*(1), 30-56.

Inoue, A. B. (2014). Theorizing failure in US writing assessments. *Research in the Teaching of English, 48*(3), 329-351.

Inoue, A. B. (2022). *Labor-based grading contracts: Building equity and inclusion in the compassionate writing classroom* (2nd ed.). The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2022.1824

Johnson, G. P. (2021). Grades as technology of surveillance: Normalization, control, and big date in the teaching of writing. In E. Beck & L. H. Campos (Eds.), *Privacy matters: Conversations about surveillances within and beyond the classroom* (pp. 53-72). Utah State University Press.

Knoblauch, C. H., & Brannon, L. (1981). Teacher commentary on student writing: The state of the art. *Freshman English News 10*(2), 1-4.

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

Oleksiak, T. (2021). Slow peer review in the writing classroom. *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, *21*(2), 369-384. https://doi.org/10.1215/15314200-8811551

Poe, M., Inoue, A. B., & Elliot, N. (2018). *Writing assessment, social justice, and the advancement of opportunity*. The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2018.0155

Price, C. (1997). *Changing the rhetoric of failure in writing classrooms: An investigation of teachers' responses to first year writing students* [Doctoral dissertation, New Mexico State University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database.

Reynolds, E. (2003). The role of self-efficacy. In D. Royer & R. Gilles (Eds.), *Directed self placement: Principles and practices* (pp. 73-103). Hampton Press.

Schneider, J., & Hutt, E. (2023). *Off the mark: How grades, ratings, and rankings undermine learning (but don't have to).* Harvard University Press.

Segal, J. (1996). Pedagogies of decentering and a discourse of failure. *Rhetoric Review 15*(1), 174-191.

Smith, S. (1997). The genre of the end comment: Conventions in teacher responses to student writing. *College of Composition and Communication, 48*(2), 249-268.

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

Sommers, N. (2013). *Responding to student writers*. Bedford/St. Martins.

Straub, R. (1996a). The concept of control in teacher response: Defining the varieties of "directive" and "facilitative" commentary. *College Composition and Communication, 47*(2), 223-251.

Straub, R. (1996b). Teacher response as conversation: More than casual talk, an exploration. *Rhetoric Review, 14*(2), 374-399. https://doi.org/10.1080/07350199609389071

Straub, R. (1997). Students' reactions to teacher comments: An exploratory study. *Research in the Teaching of English*, *31*(1), 91-119.

Students' rights to their own language (1974). CCCC Position Statement.

Thoune, D. L. (2020). Failure potential: Using failure as feedback. In A. D. Carr & L. R. Micciche (Eds.), *Failure pedagogies: Learning and unlearning what it means to fail* (pp. 53-62). Peter Lang.

Treglia, T. (2008). Feedback on feedback: Exploring student responses to teachers' written commentary. *Journal of Basic Writing 27*(1), 105–137.

West-Puckett, S., Caswell, N. I., & Banks, W. P. (2023). *Failing sideways: Queer possibilities for writing assessment*. Utah State University Press.

Williams, J. (1981). The phenomenology of error. *College Composition and Communication, 32*(2), 152-168.

Wood, S. A. (2020). Engaging in resistant genres as antiracist teacher response. *Journal of Writing Assessment*, 13(2).

Young, V. A. (2010). Should writers use they own English? *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies*, *12*(1), 110-118. https://doi.org/10.17077/2168-569X.1095