CHAPTER 16.

TRANSCENDING THE BORDER BETWEEN CLASSROOM AND NEWSROOM: AN INQUIRY INTO THE EFFICACY OF NEWSPAPER EDITING PRACTICES

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Research on workplace literacies is a burgeoning sub-field in the writing studies discipline. Moving research sites beyond the classroom can allow for a broader understanding of how language and texts function in the world, and how writing processes work and can be improved. At newspapers across the country, editors help reporters improve their writing so that novices efficiently create quality texts that, in turn, produce strong newspapers. The interaction between editors and reporters is not unlike the interaction between writing teachers and students; drafts are traded, comments are made, and (hopefully) better quality texts are produced. Because of this similarity, the wealth of research that has explored varied approaches to commenting in the writing classroom (Bardine, Schmitz Bardine, & Deegan, 2000; Ferris, 1997; Huot, 2002a; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 2000; Sugita, 2006; Treglia, 2006) can be compared with and applied to commenting practices in the workplace.

With an interest in assessing the efficacy of editing practices, I ask, How do reporters respond to editors' comments of different syntactical types? What types of comments do reporters incorporate in revision, and what types do they ignore? To begin to answer this question, I study the "conversation" between editors and reporters in the text production process as they create stories for a newspaper (Huot, 2002a, p. 135). This analysis allows me to identify in what ways editors' comments are more or less efficient in prompting reporters to respond in the ways they want. I also compare and contrast the methods of response to writing in the newsroom with response to writing in the classroom to see how both editors and teachers might learn from one another.

Response to writing research explores the ways teachers' comments are understood, used, or ignored by students. Sommers' seminal 1982 work, "Re-

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sponse to Student Writing," notes that teacher commentary can redirect the focus of a student text to the teacher's goals and away from the student writer's goals. Other scholars follow up on this concern, noting that teachers should allow students to maintain authority over the text so that they learn: "Give [students] responsibility for making their own choices as writers—and allow them to learn from those choices" (Straub, 2000, p. 31). In order to avoid taking over control of a student's writing, some teacher-scholars avoid using directive comments that demand that students make certain changes. Instead, they recommend using "hedged" commentary such as suggestions and questions to allow students to maintain a sense of authority (Bardine et al., 2000, pp. 99-100). Comments with hedges such as "You might … " or "Perhaps try … " come across to the student as polite suggestions and allow the student to maintain authorial control (Bardine et al., 2000; Treglia, 2006).

Research on teacher commentary focuses on how teachers can best communicate with students in a specific context to help them move their drafts to the next stage (Huot, 2002a). It is focused less on getting students to comply with the teacher's comments and more on getting students to think about their rhetorical choices (Straub, 2000). However, some research finds that comments of certain syntactical types are more effective than others in getting students to make the changes that the teacher requests. Some studies find that directives are the most effective comments in getting students to make substantial revisions. Imperative statements may provide a second-language student with more specific advice that is easier to understand (Sugita, 2006). Imperatives also show teacher authority, and while that has been frowned upon as limiting student authorial control, it does prompt the student to revise in an effort to meet the teacher's demand (Sugita, 2006). While students typically respond to a teacher's request for more information no matter the linguistic form (question, imperative, or observation), the imperative statements are more successful than other linguistic forms (Ferris, 1997). Not all studies have the same conclusions, however. Bardine, Schmitz Bardine, and Deegan (2000) say that direct commands are not received well by students, and Deegan writes that "if it sounds like I am ordering them to do something differently, then I might not get a motivated response" (p. 100).

Questions and observations are less effective in getting students to make changes. Second-language students may be confused by questions or may not understand the questions, which limits their ability to respond (Sugita, 2006; Ferris 1997). Similarly, observation statements also do not prompt much response from students (Ferris, 1997).

Comments with hedges may be more effective in prompting students to make changes than comments without hedges. Ferris (1997) finds in her often-

cited, large-scale study on teacher commentary that students are less likely to ignore comments with hedges than those without hedges. This may refute the above assertions that suggestion-styled comments are less likely to prompt the student to make changes than directives or other comments. But Ferris also notes that her research doesn't fully support this conclusion. In her study, the teacher uses relatively few suggestions, making findings less reliable. She also comments that students are typically savvy enough to know that teachers use hedges to avoid poaching authorial control, and that teacher comments still should be taken seriously. This may limit the impact the hedge has on whether or not a student makes the change the teacher suggests.

In sum, the research is inconclusive regarding comments of differing syntactical types and their effectiveness in getting students to make changes.

Research on commentary in the classroom has moved away from looking at the "effectiveness" of getting students to make changes in their drafts, yet this research approach in the newsroom may still be appropriate because classroom and newsroom goals are different. While the goals in the university are for students to learn through revision, the goals in the workplace are for novices to produce texts that function well in the workplace. In the university, students are accustomed to "guided participation" learning, in which the purpose of the activities in which students engage is student learning. Conversely, novices in the workplace engage in activities in order to accomplish certain tasks. While they may learn by doing these tasks, the tasks are not created solely for their learning (Dias et al., 1999). Workplace leaders may recognize that, "over the long haul" (Ferris, 2009, p. 6), learning will help novices to become better and more efficient at generating the necessary texts, yet teaching novices is not necessarily workplace leaders' primary goals.

While there is extensive research relating to workplace literacy and the transition from the university to the workplace in writing studies (Adam, 2000; Beaufort, 1999; Dias et al., 1999; Katz, 1998; MacKinnon, 1993), there appears to be less research looking at the specific types of expert writers' commentary on novice writers' workplace texts. Bisaillon (2006) acknowledges that little attention has been paid to professional editing processes and approaches. Her article seeks to rectify this problem by looking at six professional editors of texts written in French and identifying the approaches more or less experienced editors have to editing these texts. She finds that editors with more experience can fix errors automatically much of the time, while editors with less experience must resort to problem-solving approaches such as reflection. Her work differs from my study in that she studies editors who make changes directly to the texts, whereas I study editors who respond to texts to prompt writers to make changes.

Lanier (2004) explores author-editor interactions, arguing that these are important because editor comments have the capacity to appropriate the author's text. He argues that while some studies have explored editors' attitudes toward electronic editing processes, authors' attitudes toward these processes have been ignored in the literature. He studies authors' attitudes toward electronic versus written editing practices by surveying five authors in a government laboratory. He finds that authors are more receptive to electronic editing practices because the comment function in Microsoft Word allows editors not only to indicate the need for changes but also to explain the need for changes. This mitigates authors' concerns that editors make unnecessary changes. Electronic comments also limit confusion about the changes editors request, limit writers' perceptions that editors make excessive changes, and limit the time authors spend on revision.

Many studies on newspaper editing practices focus on copyediting. Russial (2009) surveys more than 150 newspapers in the United States and finds that 15 percent of newspapers do not copy edit stories before posting them to their Web sites. With a concern for why newspaper errors appear frequently, Wharton-Michael (2008) compares the relative success rates of undergraduate students' proofreading on computer screens versus on paper, finding that it is more difficult to proofread in the former medium.

It appears that research on editing in professional communication does not study editors' comments on writers' texts in the ways composition scholars have studied teachers' comments on students' texts. Composition researchers have found that a variety of teachers' comments function in different ways to appropriate authorial control, prompt student revisions, or facilitate learning. How might comments function in similar or different ways in the newsroom?

Because workplace goals are foremost to complete stories for publication, and only secondly to facilitate reporter learning (Dias et al., 1999), it is necessary to study how editors' comments get the job done (or not). This study first asks, what syntactical types of comments do editors use? Secondly, what syntactical types are most effective in getting reporters to make requested changes? Finally, how do comments and responses in the newsroom compare with comments and responses in the classroom?

METHODS

The Site

My data collection site is a business newspaper that is based in a medium-sized Midwestern city and that has a circulation of about 6,000.[1] Part of a large

publishing company, the newspaper is printed weekly and includes between six and ten stories (the majority of the editorial content in the paper) that are produced by the local branch. Two editors and three reporters work together each week to write and revise stories for the newspaper. Drafts of stories are traded back and forth between reporters and editors on an electronic server, allowing editors to make electronic comments embedded in the text, and allowing reporters to respond to those comments. I collected printouts of each stage of the story development process for nine stories that were published in one of the paper's weekly editions. Out of the nine stories I collected, five were from one reporter and four were from a second.

Typically, a reporter submits what she considers a finalized version of a story on the server to allow the editor to comment on it. Using text-editing software, one or both editors make comments that show up in the story within the text but with a bordered box surrounding the comments so that the reader can differentiate between the original text and the comment. The editor may italicize parts of the original text, his own comments, or both. I collected printouts of drafts of stories with editors' initial comments as well as printouts of stories after reporters revised in response to editors' comments.

Data Selection and Organization

After collecting the data, I first organized it into a table to compare editors' comments and reporters' revisions based on those comments. The first column of the table contains the reporters' original version; the second column contains the original version with editors' comments, and the third column contains the reporters' revised versions.[2] I decided to use eight of the nine stories I collected; I left out one story that included very few edits, and the remaining eight were split evenly between two reporters. Because writing and editing styles differ greatly from person to person, the even split may help to balance quirks unique to a single reporter. After cutting away unnecessary data, I had a corpus of ninety-nine editing comments with respective reporter responses.

Data Coding

Because my overarching research question looks to determine what types of edits prompt reporters to make editors' desired changes, I first coded the data to determine whether or not reporters made the changes that editors requested. There were clear instances where reporters made necessary changes and where they did not, but there also were several changes that fell between the two poles.

After sifting through reporters' varied changes, I pinned down a detailed coding scheme that categorized reporters' changes into one of the descriptions found in Table 1.

Table 1. Detailed coding key

√	Reporter made changes
X	Reporter did not make changes
√+	Reporter made changes, plus additional unprompted changes
√-	Reporter did not fully make changes
√+-	Reporter did not fully make changes, but made unprompted, additional changes
X+	Reporter did not make changes, but made unprompted, additional changes

Because many of the edits did not fit into a black-and-white pattern of either "changes made" or "changes not made," it was necessary to create additional categories that allowed for reporters' variations on revisions. To judge where a reporter's revision fell in this categorization scheme, I looked closely at what the editor asked the reporter to change, and I compared that with the reporter's revision. As evidenced by the coding key above, reporters interestingly riffed on the changes editors requested. At times, reporters ignored editors' comments but changed something else; other times, reporters complied with editors' suggestions, and went beyond the suggestions to make additional changes. Many times, reporters appeared to attempt the changes the editor wanted, but they seemed to fall short of the mark. Finally, sometimes reporters fell short of the requested changes, but then made additional changes that were not requested. These diverse revision activities required the detailed coding key found in Table 1.

Even though I filed reporters' changes into one of six categories, I still was able to more generally categorize changes into one of two categories: complying with editors' changes or not complying with changes. Reporters were considered to have complied with editors' requests if they made changes (√) or if they made changes, plus additional unprompted changes (√+). These two categories considered the changes "successful" because reporters did what they were asked to do (√), even if they also did more than they were asked (√+). On the other hand, revisions that fell into one of the other four categories were not complying with editors' demands. This more general categorization allowed me to address the overall efficacy of specific editing practices.

After determining the extent to which reporters made requested changes, I then developed a coding scheme for the types of edits that editors

make. To allow for comparison between this data and response-to-writing research, I began to categorize the data into a general coding scheme that included suggestions, questions, observations, directives and re-writes, as these are the commonly used categories in writing research and are general enough to be applicable to my data. Using these categories as a beginning framework, I added or split categories when I uncovered additional types of edits. I ended up with six main categories and an additional six categories that constituted various combinations of the first six. The main categories are as follows.

- **Question:** Asks question to request more information
- **Suggestion for rewrite:** Rewrites text and adds a question mark to indicate a suggestion (e.g., relatives?)
- **Suggestion for change:** Suggests change (indicated by editor's use of "I would," "Maybe," or "You might")
- **Directive:** Demands change be made
- **Rewrite:** Rewrites text (no question mark)
- **Observation:** Indicates reader response

Table 2 includes additional categories that accommodated comments that did not fit into one of the six main categories. These are descriptions of comments that were combinations of two of the original categories identified above.

Categories such as suggested rewrites and suggestions, directives and rewrites, or suggested rewrites and rewrites seem as if they could be combined, respectively, but I kept them separate for specific reasons. First, suggested rewrites and suggestions are separate because the former may be easier to accommodate than the latter. While a suggested rewrite offers new text, a suggestion leaves that up to the reporter, making the latter potentially more difficult to accommodate, which may affect reporters' compliance rates. Directives and rewrites were kept separate for the same reason; the latter may be easier to accommodate because the rewritten text is provided, and this could impact reporters' likelihood of complying with the editor's comment. Finally, suggested rewrites and rewrites were kept separate because the former is a suggestion while the latter is a directive, and, as composition research has indicated, that may affect reporter compliance.

After generating the coding schemes and coding the data, I counted the frequencies with which the types of editing comments and the types of changes appeared in the data and charted these numbers in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequencies of types of editing comments and typs of changes

	Question	Directive	Rewrite	Suggested rewrite	Observation/Directive	Question/Directive	Suggestion	Observation	Directive/Sugg. Rewrite	Observation/ Sugg. Rewrite	Observation/ Question	Question/Suggestion
√	18	16	9	9	5	1	2	3		1		1
√+		1	3	1					1			
X	9			1		1						
√-	1	1	1		1	2			2		1	
√+-		2					1					
X+	2	1		1	1							
Total	30	21	13	12	7	4	3	3	3	1	1	1
Compliance Rate %	60	81	92	83	71	25	67	100	33	100	0	100

Key: √ = made changes; √+ made changes plus additional changes; X = did not make changes; √- = did not fully make changes; √+- = did not fully make changes, but made unprompted, additional changes; X+ = did not make changes, but made unprompted, additional changes

RESULTS

As shown in Table 2, the most commonly made editing comments were questions, with editors writing 30 questions out of the total 99 editing comments made.[3] Reporters supplied answers to editors' questions 60% of the time, indicating a 60% compliance rate. Reporters ignored nine, or 30%, of editors' questions. In the following example, the editor asks two questions which are only partially answered (editors' comments are in bold, my formatting):

Editor Comment: Question	**Reporter Response: Reporter did not fully make changes (√-)**
Johnstone said the company invites clients in for tours, giving a few each week, and then explains what Johnstone & Sons[4] can do to fix some of the major concerns they have with current suppliers. **(how many competitors does it have? who are some of the?** [sic]	Johnstone said the company invites clients in for tours, giving a few each week, and then explains what Johnstone & Sons can do to fix some of the major concerns they have with current suppliers, including the company the four partners used to work at.

The reporter did answer the second question, "who are some of the [competitors]?" by noting that the company competes with the owners' former employer. However, the reporter did not supply the answer to the first question, "how many competitors does it have?" This reporter response was thus categorized as making some changes, but not all requested changes.

The second-most common editing comment was a directive, which reporters complied with 17 out of 21 times, or 81% of the time. None of the directives were fully ignored, and small but insufficient changes were made in response to the remaining four directives. In the following example, the editor directed the reporter to make a change, and the reporter fully complied:

Editor Comment: Directive	**Reporter Response: Reporter made changes (√)**
Smith said the new building offers ABC Corp. more efficient space, with *easy access* (**rephrase as it repeats quote**) to Interstate 55.	Smith said the new building offers ABC Corp. more efficient space, with proximity to Interstate 55.

In the above example, the reporter fully complied with the editor's demand by changing the portion of the text the editor had italicized.

Reporters frequently complied with editors' rewrites and suggested rewrites. Of the 13 editor rewrites observed, 12 of them were complied with; of the 12 editor suggested rewrites, 10 were complied with:

Editor Comment: Rewrite	**Reporter Response: Reporter made changes (√)**
Stein said the building was (**originally**) built with student labor *originally* and by restoring it …	Stein said the building was originally built with student labor and by restoring it …
Editor Comment: Suggested Rewrite	**Reporter Response: Reporter made changes (√)**
Managing debt, even in a year where many businesses saw revenue decline, is (**stronger verb … remains?.**) a key part of running a successful business. [sic]	Managing debt, even in a year where many businesses saw revenue decline, remains a key part of running a successful business.

These excerpts show that reporters made changes to the editor's rewrite in the first example and the editor's suggested rewrite (indexed by the question mark) in the second example. Compliance rates and specific compliance types are listed in Table 2.

DISCUSSION

It appears as if the more direct comments—directives and rewrites—are better at getting reporters to make necessary revisions while indirect comments—suggestions, questions, suggested rewrites, and observations—are less successful.

Questions and directives are the two most prevalent types of editing comments (editors made 30 of the former and 21 of the latter), which provides a point of comparison. If editors measure success by how well reporters comply with their comments, then directives appear to be more successful than questions. Reporters fail to answer questions editors ask them 40 percent of the

time, and they fail to respond to directives 20 percent of the time. In addition to questions' being less effective in prompting changes than directives, questions also are the most commonly ignored syntactical type of editing comment. A total of 11 comments are fully ignored (simply deleted without additional, unprompted changes), and nine of those 11 ignored comments are questions. The relative failure of questions seems significant, since asking questions is the most commonly used editing comment, representing almost one-third of the total edits in the corpus.

The syntactical construction of the directive may make the editors' directives more difficult to ignore than the syntactical construction of the question, as a directive is a demand to do something, and ignoring this demand would be an overtly subversive act. In the following example, the editor's second comment (in bold, my formatting) is a directive: "Managing debt, even in a year where many businesses saw revenue decline, is **(stronger verb … remains?.)**a key part of running a successful business. **put a another graph in on why**" [sic]. The editor directs the reporter to discuss why managing debt is important to running a business, which addresses the main focus of the story. The reporter responds to the directive edit by adding the following sentence: "By getting their books in order, businesses should be ready to go once the recovery kicks into gear." In this example, the editing comment posed as a directive prompts the reporter to make the required change.

On the other hand, editing comments that prompt the reporter to provide similar information but that are posed as questions may be less likely to produce results, as in the following example:

> Four years ago, four friends and former co-workers decided to leave **(departed/left)** steady jobs at major Camden-area technology companies to form their own firm. **(why? what did they see/recognize in the market? and what kind of company did they create?)**

In the second bolded portion of the excerpt, the first two questions, "why? what did they see/recognize in the market?" go unanswered in the second draft of the article. It is possible that a question is easier to ignore than a directive because a directive demands that the subordinate complete a task, and ignoring that demand may be perceived as a subversive act. Additionally, a reporter may feel more comfortable ignoring a question because it may appear to be a request for information as opposed to a demand for information. Finally, questions can be confusing or ambiguous, as compared with directives, which can give a reporter clearer direction for revision.

Just as reporters more frequently ignore questions, they also ignore other comments that may be perceived as undemanding, such as suggested rewrites, suggestions, and observations. Of the 51 comments that fall into these categories, reporters fully address (√) or fully address with additional changes (√+) 33 of the comments. The remaining 18 comments fall into one of the four non-complicit categories: ignored (X), ignored with additional changes (X+), changes not fully made (√-), and changes not fully made yet additional changes made (√-+). This indicates a 35 percent fail rate for these types of "innocuous" comments.

On the other hand, just as reporters dutifully follow the demands of a directive, they also typically adhere to the directed rewrites. When the two categories of rewrites and directives are taken together, the result is a total of 34 comments. Reporters respond favorably to 29 of the comments and unfavorably to five of them, resulting in a 15 percent fail rate. This suggests that reporters comply with comments more frequently if the comments are of a demanding nature. Conversely, if the comments appear to be options, reporters are less likely to make the required changes.

While demanding comments more frequently prompt changes than subtler comments such as questions and observations, a closer look at some of the categories complicates this conclusion. For instance, one would assume that in a comparison of rewrites and suggested rewrites, reporters would be more likely to make changes for the former instead of the latter because the former is a directive and the latter a question. The numbers do not support this assertion. There are a total of 12 suggested rewrites, and reporters comply with 10 of the 12 changes. Editors make 13 directed rewrites, and reporters comply with 12 of the 13 changes. These numbers imply that reporters are likely to make the changes whether an editor suggests *or* directs the rewrite.

Applying Classroom Findings to Newsroom Data

The comments that writing teachers advocate—those that allow the writer to maintain authorial control—are also the ones that writers in the workplace are less likely to consider in revision. On the other hand, the comments that allow the teacher or editor to appropriate control of the work—directives—are more effective in getting the writer to complete a desired revision. This makes logical sense because the comments that allow for authorial control also allow the author the authority to ignore the comments. Teachers should employ these types of syntactical forms in their comments because, in the classroom, the main goal is student learning (Straub, 2000). However, because the goal in the workplace is get reporters to complete a task (Dias et al., 1999), these types of

comments—shown here to be less effective in producing the desired result—may not be the best choices for editors. Paradoxically, in order to get reporters to make changes, editors should use directives; but in order to allow reporters to *learn* to write better, according to writing scholars, editors should use other syntactical forms that allow reporters authorial control.

Implications for the Newsroom

Editors, therefore, seem to be caught in a double bind. Neither commenting strategy seems appropriate. But since this study tells us that reporters respond differently to comments of different types, we might ask, "How can commentary facilitate both reporter compliance *and* learning?" Perhaps commentary that includes combinations of syntactical types (e.g., directives and questions) would both encourage compliance but also allow for the maintenance of authorial control.

Classroom research also may shed light on the trend that reporters tend to comply with both suggestive and directive rewrites, a trend that seems to contradict the general pattern that reporters comply with suggestions more often than directives. Classroom research has found that students shy away from comments that ask them to make difficult changes; we might also assume that students—and possibly reporters—would be more willing to comply with easy requests. Maria Treglia, the researcher who conducted a linguistic study on students' revisions based on instructor comments, found that no matter the linguistic makeup of the comment, if the content is asking students to conduct "challenging analytical tasks—rethinking and connecting ideas, and providing information that wasn't readily available," then students had trouble responding (Treglia, 2006, n.p.). Perhaps the opposite also is true: if the revision requested is easy, writers will make those changes without protest. Rewrites and suggested rewrites are equally easy, since they require only that the reporter copy down the editor's rewritten text. Reporters therefore may be equally likely to make these changes, which might explain the similar numbers in these categories. Editors may take this phenomenon into consideration when working with reporters. Perhaps when editors request difficult revisions, they can provide more guidance or time when asking reporters to make these changes.

While this study sheds light on reporters' responses to comments of differing syntactical types, we might conduct additional research that gets at professional editor and writer interactions in other ways. We could study conference-style mentoring, an alternative approach that may satisfy both editors' and reporters' needs (Wiist, 1997). In short, we might continue this inquiry by asking, "How do novice workplace writers learn *and* get work done?"

Implications for the Classroom

This chapter has been written under the assumption that questions, observations, and suggestions—"soft" comments—allow the writer more authorial control and therefore promote student learning (Bardine et al., 2000; Straub, 2000). As emphasized above, reporters comply with these comments less frequently than with directives. Could the problem lie not with authorial control, but with specificity? Perhaps the ambiguity of questions and suggestions leave the writer unsure of how to proceed. If, in this hypothetical scenario, professional writers are unsure about what to do with these types of comments, what can we expect from students? One conclusion is to resort to appropriating students' work and issuing only directives, going against much research that has told us to do otherwise. The paradox that faces editors seems as if it faces teachers as well.

This dilemma prompts me to return to this question: What are our goals as teachers, and do they differ from those of editors? If we make comments on students' texts, don't we expect students to make changes? Not necessarily. Certain types of assessment, such as using portfolios as a way to focus students on the act of revising and to assess their own work throughout the term, prompt students to take control of their writing and make choices about what and how to revise (Huot, 2002b). What is important to us is not that they make changes but that they make decisions (Straub, 2000) about their writing. This thinking, whether it ultimately produces the best possible draft upon completion or not (Huot, 2002a), facilitates student learning and prepares them for future writing endeavors.

This study, then, in its comparison of teacher and editor response practices, calls us to reflect on our own response processes, an exercise that scholars remind us is crucial to aligning our commentary with our goals (Bardine et al., 2000) and to communicating with students (Huot, 2002a). We must ask ourselves, What *are* our goals when we respond to student writing? Do we want them to make changes? Do we want them to think about alternatives? Do we want them to consider readers' positioned responses (Kynard, 2006)? This self-reflection might prompt us to hone our commenting techniques to better allow us to accomplish carefully defined goals within our individual classrooms (Bardine et al., 2000), and perhaps this same type of reflection might help editors to align their goals and their practices in newsrooms.

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NOTES

1. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained for this study.

2. Two additional columns were added to the right of these to provide room for stories that were edited twice. Only one story out of the nine I collected fell into this category, and I decided not to use these second-version edits in my analysis. I felt that including these edits in the corpus might skew the data because the reporter appeared to have ignored almost all of the comments in the second round of revisions. It is possible that the trouble of a second round of edits may have resulted in frustration in the reporter and, thus, the reporter's decision to delete the editors' comments.

3. The results do not pretend to be statistically significant. Instead, this small-scale study provides a snapshot of what commenting practices and subsequent responses look like, and these initial findings can serve as exploratory research on which future work can be based.

4. Names of people, companies, and geographic markers have been changed to protect the identity of the newspaper and its sources.

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