

Introduction

Since the publication of the first edition of this book in 2002, there have been several major shifts in the research on and use of peer response in second language (L2) writing classes. First, the research that has emerged over the past two decades has come from a wide range of classrooms around the world—including research from China, Egypt, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Korea, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam, among others—and suggests that peer response is now commonplace in foreign (FL) and L2 writing classrooms. Second, much of the recent research has focused on the use of computer-mediated communication for peer response and, in particular, Web 2.0 technologies such as Facebook, blogs, and wikis, for L2 writing development. These developments since the first edition was published inspired us to revise and update this book.

Before proceeding further, however, it may be useful to define what we mean by the term *peer response*. In this book, it is used as an umbrella term to designate what are also referred to as *peer feedback*, *peer review*, *peer assessment*, or *peer editing* in teaching L2 writing. Although the term is probably easily understood, it might be good to define it more clearly from the outset. *Peer response* is the use of learners as sources of information and as interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume the roles and responsibilities more typically taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing. Due to the

collaborative nature and varying modes and formats employed in this activity (written, face-to-face, computer-mediated), *peer response*, as the more general term, is used.

The term *peer assessment* is also often used in the literature and may refer to the act of giving feedback as well as grading a peer's work; peer assessment is often used for both oral (speeches or debates) as well as written work. Therefore, while both *peer response* and *peer assessment* imply that students are engaged in evaluation of peers' work, the term *peer response* has traditionally been used to describe the evaluation of written work only, and does not imply grading or scoring of peers' work, which is why that is the term used in this book. A detailed discussion of peer assessment can be found in Hansen Edwards (2013); peer assessment is also an important component of an Assessment for Learning (AfL)—distinctive from the more traditional approach of Assessment of Learning (AoL); a detailed discussion of peer assessment for AfL can be found in Lee (2011, 2016) and Lee and Coniam (2013).

The Rationale for This Book

The first edition was published in 2002, and at about that same time, the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) was slowly gaining ground in language, and specifically, L2 writing classrooms. In the first edition of this book, we incorporated the latest research on the use of both asynchronous (delayed time frame) and synchronous (real time) modes of CMC for peer response in L2 writing classes. With the advent of Web 2.0 technologies in the past two decades, the use of CMC—and specifically web-based technologies—for peer response has become even more widespread, with a large body of research exploring different facets of using CMC for peer response. Therefore, the Second Edition attempts to incorporate the most current research findings on peer response to present readers with the most up-to-date information about how to successfully implement peer response in the L2 writing classroom. Since the focus of the research over the past two decades is different

from that upon which the first edition was based, the organization of this edition necessarily differs from the 2002 volume.

The first edition discussed four major theoretical frameworks that supported peer response: Process Writing Theory, Collaborative Learning Theory, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, and Interaction and Second Language Acquisition. Both the past as well as the current research on peer response, including the vast number of studies investigating the use of CMC for peer response, continues to provide evidence that peer response fosters and supports language behaviors that benefit not only L2 writing development but also second language acquisition in general. As noted in 2002, research based on these theoretical stances has provided substantial evidence that peer response activities help L2 learners develop not only their writing abilities, but also their overall L2 language abilities through the negotiation of meaning that typically takes place during peer revision activities. Current research has expanded upon and extended these findings, which are addressed specifically in the discussions of modes (Chapter 1) and benefits of peer response (Chapter 2).

This Second Edition conforms to the major characteristics of the series—comprehensibility, illustrativeness, and research-based data—in dealing with peer response from three perspectives: that of teachers, learners, and researchers. All the chapters are centered around the questions that teachers of multilingual writers typically might encounter in their daily classroom practice. These questions are arranged around salient issues that are discussed via an overview of the literature on peer response in L2 writing over the past several decades, with a focus on the research that has been conducted since the publication of the first edition.

The Structure of This Book

In this edition, the discussion of peer response begins with a discussion of modes of peer response (Chapter 1). We have chosen to begin this volume with a discussion of traditional vs. CMC modes of peer response, with a focus on newer CMC modes such as wikis and blogs, because this chapter provides the foundation for the discussion in the subsequent chapters on benefits, foci, participation, and training of students. Because the past two decades have seen a substantive increase in research on the use of CMC for peer response, there is a need to establish the features, benefits, and constraints of the different modes of peer response early in the volume, before discussing other issues.

Chapter 2 builds on the discussion in Chapter 1 and explores how students benefit from engaging in peer response activities.

Chapter 3 addresses the choice of foci during peer response and the benefits of different types of foci at various stages of the writing process.

Chapter 4 discusses different types of participation as well as the types of roles both students and teachers engage in during peer response.

The focus of Chapter 5 is the training and guidance that students need to be able to engage productively in a peer response activity.

Finally, Chapter 6, *Making Peer Response Effective*, presents problems and solutions in peer response and a final checklist for teachers to use before engaging in peer response activities.

A number of key concepts are introduced and frame the discussion in this edition; these concepts are drawn from our reading of the research and provide the foundation for our synthesis and interpretation of the research findings. For example, in Chapter 1 we make a distinction between *synchronous* (real time) and *asynchronous* (delayed time frame) CMC, as these two modes have different features, benefits, and

constraints. We also make the distinction between modes for *commenting* and modes for *discussion* (Chapter 1 and Chapter 2), as different modes may lend themselves better to different types of peer response behavior. We also discuss the benefits of both *giving* and *receiving* peer response feedback (Chapter 2), as well as *surface* versus *deep* feedback (Chapter 3). We highlight different types of participation behaviors, including *active* vs. *inactive* participation, and the benefits of both *active productive* and *receptive* participation (Chapter 4).

Within each chapter, various issues are addressed through various examples of learners at different proficiency levels and teaching contexts. Research findings, both positive and negative, are used to elucidate our discussion rather than a priority in guiding the discussion. In each chapter, apart from the topical discussion prompted by teacher-initiated questions, we offer comments, explanations, and suggestions for teachers and students that we believe can be beneficial for the effective and efficient use of peer response activities in the classroom.

While this edition builds on the framework and findings discussed in the first edition, it presents each chapter as a self-standing unit, so that readers can choose whether to read each chapter in succession or read each individually/independently. As such, some of the research findings are recycled in different chapters, though the nature of the discussion of the findings differs according to the focus on each chapter. Readers may also note that in many cases, this volume provides a lengthy list of citations in the discussion of various features, benefits, or constraints of peer response. This has been done purposefully to aid both teachers and researchers in finding relevant and current literature for further reading and exploration.