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Peer editing in upper elementary classrooms

Janice Kittelson
University of Northern Iowa

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Peer editing in upper elementary classrooms

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine teachers' perceptions of peer editing in upper elementary classrooms. Semi-structured interviews were the central focus of this study. Six teachers participated in the study. Two taught fourth grade, two taught fifth grade, and two taught sixth grade. Each teacher was interviewed twice. In the first round of interviews, open-ended questions were asked of the teachers. In the second round of interviews, teachers were asked to elaborate or clarify selected responses to initial questions and were asked to comment on the preliminary findings from the first round of interviews. This study produced seven findings about how teachers perceive peer editing in upper elementary classrooms. The first finding indicated that student selection was the most popular method of developing editing groups or partners and that these selections were made on the basis of friendship rather than ability. Second, teachers believed that modeling of the editing process and careful instruction dealing with appropriate responses were crucial to the success of peer editing. Third, most teachers perceived their role to be that of a circulating helper, giving individual assistance to students. Fourth, teachers believed that students reacted positively to peer editing, and they saw very little difficulty with disagreements or poor attitude. Fifth, teachers agreed that there is a strong correlation between reading ability and the ability to locate errors in writing. Sixth, teachers expressed some concern over the lack of transfer of skills they saw in students' writing, but they stated that more transfer took place after peer editing than with traditional instruction. Seventh, teachers believed that peer editing was beneficial for all students regardless of ability. Teachers mentioned time constraints and occasional management problems as minor disadvantages.

PEER EDITING IN UPPER ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

An Abstract of a Research Paper
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

Janice Kittelson
University of Northern Iowa

June 1989

This Research Paper by: Janice Kittelson

Entitled: PEER EDITING IN UPPER ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the
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David W. Moore

7/6/89
Date Approved

Director of Research Paper

David W. Moore

7/6/89
Date Approved

Graduate Faculty Advisor

Sharon Arthur Moore

July 7, 1989
Date Approved

Graduate Faculty Reader

Roger A. Kueter

7/7/89
Date Approved

Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Statement of Purpose | 4 |
| Definition of Terms | 4 |
| Importance of the Study | 5 |
| CHAPTER II - REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE | 6 |
| Positive Accounts | 6 |
| Negative Accounts | 10 |
| Summary | 13 |
| CHAPTER III - METHOD | 15 |
| Subjects | 15 |
| Procedure | 16 |
| CHAPTER IV - FINDINGS | 18 |
| Initial Findings | 18 |
| Final Findings | 26 |
| CHAPTER V - CONCLUSION | 30 |
| Summary | 30 |
| Discussion | 32 |
| Implications | 33 |
| REFERENCES | 36 |

| | |
|------------|----|
| APPENDICES | 38 |
| Appendix A | 39 |
| Appendix B | 40 |
| Appendix C | 43 |
| Appendix D | 46 |
| Appendix E | 49 |
| Appendix F | 55 |
| Appendix G | 59 |
| Appendix H | 63 |
| Appendix I | 65 |
| Appendix J | 67 |
| Appendix K | 69 |
| Appendix L | 71 |
| Appendix M | 72 |

ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to determine teachers' perceptions of peer editing in upper elementary classrooms. Semi-structured interviews were the central focus of this study.

Six teachers participated in the study. Two taught fourth grade, two taught fifth grade, and two taught sixth grade. Each teacher was interviewed twice. In the first round of interviews, open-ended questions were asked of the teachers. In the second round of interviews, teachers were asked to elaborate or clarify selected responses to initial questions and were asked to comment on the preliminary findings from the first round of interviews.

This study produced seven findings about how teachers perceive peer editing in upper elementary classrooms. The first finding indicated that student selection was the most popular method of developing editing groups or partners and that these selections were made on the basis of friendship rather than ability. Second, teachers believed that modeling of the editing process and careful instruction dealing with appropriate responses were crucial to the success of peer editing. Third, most teachers perceived their role to be that of a circulating helper, giving individual assistance to students. Fourth, teachers believed that students reacted positively to peer editing, and they saw very little difficulty with disagreements or poor attitude. Fifth, teachers agreed that there is

a strong correlation between reading ability and the ability to locate errors in writing. Sixth, teachers expressed some concern over the lack of transfer of skills they saw in students' writing, but they stated that more transfer took place after peer editing than with traditional instruction. Seventh, teachers believed that peer editing was beneficial for all students regardless of ability. Teachers mentioned time constraints and occasional management problems as minor disadvantages.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Until the mid seventies, the teaching of writing was a very structured, product-oriented endeavor. Mechanics and organization were of prime importance. Students were often reluctant writers, and teachers spent hours correcting papers. The logistics of the teacher sitting down with each student and helping revise each draft were impossible.

With the emergence of the writer's workshop philosophy of teaching writing, where the emphasis is on process rather than product, teachers are being encouraged to use students as peer responders and editors. Peer editing appears to have evolved from the practice of using peer conferencing as a means of helping writers develop a sense of audience. In conferencing, students get together in small groups to share one another's writing, often orally, and then discuss it and ask questions to aid the writer in clarifying ideas. A logical step was to go from peer response, with its emphasis on ideas, to peer editing, which emphasizes mechanics. The editor is encouraged to circle words perceived as incorrectly spelled and to use the commonly accepted editing symbols to indicate incorrect punctuation or grammar. Not only do the writers receive help with their weak areas of writing mechanics, but the readers, by carefully editing the work of a peer, are believed to transfer this editing skill to their own writing.

The editing process can be handled several ways. Students can be grouped in pairs randomly, by ability, or by interest, or they can become part of a small editors group (four or five students) whose specialty is locating mechanical errors for the rest of the class. Editor groups might receive some specialized instruction ahead of time. Ideally, the editors would change on a revolving basis so that each student would have the opportunity to serve in the group.

The most crucial part of peer editing, as indicated by the unanimous agreement of the best-known authorities in the writing field, is the preliminary, whole-class instruction and modeling of the editing process by the teacher. Mini-workshops are given in which students receive intense training in the most common types of errors involving print conventions such as capitalization, commas, ending punctuation, and quotation marks. The workshops follow a direct instruction model and utilize students' actual writing samples. The teacher might use an overhead projector and demonstrate use of a particular print convention. The teacher then might ask the class to locate and correct errors on a selected piece, thus receiving feedback on the students' ability to apply what they've been taught. Only after careful demonstration, practice, and application should students be asked to edit on their own.

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, a large number of texts and research articles devoted to writer's workshops were published. Subsequent studies, such as ones by Fitzgibbon (1980), James (1981), McManus and Kirby (1988), and Ziegler (1986), were

conducted to determine the effectiveness of peer interaction during the writing process. These studies added strength to the recommendations of the peer editing advocates. Peer editing was found to be beneficial both to the reader and writer. Writers received valuable feedback and readers honed their critical editing skills and transferred these skills to their own writing. The idea of peer editing would appear to be a very sound, effective practice.

Despite the support for peer editing, some concerns remain. Most available studies are drawn from the secondary level, yet many texts devoted to process writing encourage the use of peer editing at the elementary level. Authors of these texts have apparently been successful in incorporating peer editing into their own classrooms, but few if any studies have explored regular classroom teachers' experiences with peer editing. Most texts fail to address important concerns such as the general lack of expertise of elementary-age students and the varied abilities to be accommodated in an elementary classroom. Several questions still need to be answered. How do elementary teachers view peer editing? Can their students edit a peer's writing effectively? Do low-ability students receive benefits from attempting to edit another's writing? Is there a noticeable transfer of skills because of peer editing? How do students feel about peer editing? These concerns and questions are important when considering the peer editing task for elementary students.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe teachers' perceptions of peer editing in upper elementary classrooms.

Definition of Terms

Peer Conferencing

The term peer conferencing is often used interchangeably with peer response. Students get together, usually in small groups, to share and respond to one another's writing. At this time, peers are encouraged to ask questions to clarify anything they don't understand. These questions also encourage the writer to expand upon an idea or provide greater detail or description. This is the time when an audience reacts to the ideas expressed by a piece of writing. The focus is on content.

Peer Editing

Peer editing involves mechanics. Pieces of writing are exchanged with peers and attempts are made to locate mechanical errors. Attention is focused on spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Peer editing occurs after revision for content and organization, and is the final step in preparing a piece of writing for its final draft.

Writer's Workshop

Writer's Workshop is an approach to writing that emphasizes the process rather than the product. Although several terms are used synonymously to describe the steps used in writer's workshop, the most common appear to be (1) prewriting activities, (2) drafting, (3)

revision, including the final and separate step, editing, and (4) publication.

Daily Oral Language

Daily Oral Language consists of sentences written on the board containing incorrect spelling, grammar, and punctuation to be corrected by students on a daily basis for practice and review (Vail & Papenfuss, 1982).

Importance of the Study

In order to successfully implement peer editing into the elementary-school writing curriculum, teachers need to understand its positive and negative features. Teachers who attempt to accommodate the varied abilities of their students need to be aware of both the benefits and the shortcomings of the peer-editing process. This study is an attempt to enlighten, reassure, or alert teachers who are considering the use of peer editing in their writing curriculum.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Most of the professional literature available today has embraced peer editing as a boon to students and teachers. It saves the teacher hours of red-penciling, and the writers and readers benefit from editing one another's work. However, cautions and concerns about peer editing also have been published. This chapter contains research findings from two opposing views, those that support peer editing and those that question its merit. The first section deals with research in favor of peer editing.

Positive Accounts

Calkins (1986) felt that there were obvious advantages to peer editing: "Children help each other, they talk punctuation and spelling, they use each other's strengths, they need less input from teachers" (p. 207). The only problem Calkins saw was that peers tend to become over-zealous and frequently mark up one another's papers. Her solution to this problem was to ask peer editors to write their corrections and comments on a separate sheet of paper and give the writer the final decision.

Clark (1987) discussed editing teams and referred to the work of peer editors as test reading or peer reviewing. He listed several advantages of peer editing.

It creates a real audience for the work of student writers. Children begin to write for each other rather than for a single adult. This often inspires them to work more carefully and to

take responsibility for the information and mechanics in their writing. (p. 143)

Clark (1987) also discussed other results that occurred after using editing teams. Students improved their handwriting so that it was more legible for their peer editors. Although students missed many errors, they seemed to find the most important ones that affected meaning. Students also found fewer mistakes toward the end of a story. Clark speculated that this was due to the editors' fatigue or boredom as they neared the end, or that they were careless because of a desire to finish their work.

Collins (1985) began his chapter on editing with a firm statement: "The best way to learn to edit your own work is by practicing on someone else's" (p. 32). Like many others in the field of writing, Collins stressed the importance of preliminary instruction. Teachers should demonstrate how to edit samples of papers containing selected print conventions before providing students papers to peer edit. He suggested beginning with a very simple task, such as editing the date, name, title, or margins of a paper. Concerning grouping, Collins suggested a "focus correction system," a grouping by like needs in which specific information is provided about the criteria to be used during editing. The teacher only focuses on two or three areas, and students concentrate on these areas when editing a peer's work. A group who is experiencing difficulty with commas, for example, is given direct instruction and then edits only commas. Collins believed that by concentrating on a

few select conventions, students were more willing to edit carefully. He stated, "Focus correction saves correcting time and helps the student consider the quality of the paper in relationship to a few clearly specified criteria rather than an infinite number of highly subjective criteria" (p. 19).

Fitzgibbon (1980) carefully spelled out his use of peer editing, which evolved from his frustration at not having the time to work with and appreciate individual students' writing attempts. He spoke of the bleeding red pen syndrome and lamented:

The hours spent on this activity and the reactions of the students when their compositions were returned made one point clear. Those who did well and had few critical red marks usually saved their compositions; those who did poorly disposed of them quickly. (p. 27)

After carefully teaching editing skills and acquainting students with available resources to use, Fitzgibbon remarked:

After only one week I found the results greater than I had anticipated. Students seemed to take a renewed pride and interest in writing. By the second week, a greater effort was being made on the first drafts, especially in mechanics, grammar, and handwriting. As one student remarked, "I don't want my friends reading something that isn't very good or looks too messy." (p. 28)

Fitzgibbon concluded:

Although I had made editing comments similar to those now being made by the students, the reactions were totally different. Clearly, students cared more about the comments and suggestions of their peers than they did their instructor's. The quality of the papers, in most cases, was beyond my greatest expectations. (p. 29)

Hansen (1987) stated that children should use any method other than going to the teacher when encountering editing problems. She

encouraged children to go to a classmate, have the classmate draw circles around words perceived as wrong, and then check those words. She commented, "Young children often demand help with spelling while they are composing initial drafts because their command of phonics is so limited, they can't even get their ideas down. They get help from others when they need it" (p. 115).

Gordon (1984) used peer editing in conjunction with same-needs grouping. She brought a small group of children together who were having the same difficulty. With regard to peer editing, Gordon stated, "Children can often spot misspelled words in someone else's work more quickly than in their own. Working in a small group correcting each other's work helped some of my children enormously" (p. 46). Gordon deliberately chose as a peer helper a child who had already struggled with and overcome a specific weak area being experienced by the author needing help. She stated:

This was tremendously reinforcing all around. It helped the author with his or her writing and set up a situation in which he or she could learn from a peer. It also heightened the helper's self-confidence in an area that had been difficult, exposing him or her to that area one more time -- a kind of instant review. (pp. 43-44)

Graves (1983) supported peer editing as well, describing the entire process of how his peer-editing work with young children started as a disaster and evolved until the children's skills became quite sophisticated. He inadvertently supported the critics of peer editing, however, when he remarked, "It was clear which children [the good writers] were able to use the process to help others. I would

then chat with one of those children and tell them they'd be called upon to help others" (p. 37). Graves also discussed a rather telling event about a principal's request for help with editing in a lower grade. Graves was asked to provide students from his classroom to assist the younger students. Graves stated, "Five of the best children then went to another room to provide more help for the teacher" (p. 38).

Kirby and Liner (1981) referred to peer editing as "peer grading." They admitted that it was controversial and acknowledged some of this criticism: "Many teachers feel that they are abdicating their responsibility as evaluators when they ask students to grade one another's papers. Other teachers feel that students are not capable of careful judgment of the work of their peers" (p. 196). But Kirby and Liner went on to defend their position by stating:

We teach students to evaluate one another's papers not to make our job easier or lessen the paper crunch (although both are side effects of peer grading), but because the process teaches them many things better than we can. Careful reading of a number of student papers sensitizes them to problems in their own papers. As they offer editing and proofreading advice to peers, they are also teaching themselves. Taking students through the judgment process not only makes them better proofreaders, it also teaches them how to make critical judgments of written products. (p. 197)

Negative Accounts

This section deals with research findings that take a negative view of peer editing. These accounts are in the minority, but they raise some important issues.

Graner (1987) raised serious questions about the benefits of peer editing and commented strongly on the limitations he saw. He stated that poor writers lack the skill to make effective evaluations and are often unprepared and unmotivated in the peer-group setting. Another major concern was that the classroom teacher must relinquish a great deal of control. He saw this as a major drawback.

Roessler (1983) also expressed concern for the unstructured setting and potential lack of control of peer editing sessions. He stated, "Even with the most energetic supervision, no teacher can effectively monitor all groups to ensure they are performing the required work" (p. 160). He believed that often these small conferencing groups deteriorate quickly into idle chatter because the students lack the skills and motivation to carry through.

Pianko and Radzik (1980) questioned how an unskilled editor can guide another unskilled writer in a process neither one understands well. They also pointed out that students feel uncomfortable giving negative feedback to their peers or pointing out what they perceive as errors or shortcomings. Too often these peer-editing conferences consist of nothing but indiscriminate praise and positive feedback.

Pianko and Radzik (1980) integrated peer editing into their writer's workshop and attempted to teach students how to critique a paper for conventions such as grammar, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and organization. They held small group editing workshops for nearly an entire semester and were convinced that students could assist one another in eliminating errors from their

writing. They persevered despite misgivings stated by the students themselves. Pianko and Radzik reported negative student feedback, such as, " 'She told me this is wrong, yet you say it's right,' 'He always gives me the wrong advice,' and 'This is like the blind leading the blind' " (p. 221).

Unwilling to give up, Pianko and Radzik (1980) looked for weaknesses in their own instruction and modified their workshops and techniques, but to no avail. They finally stated flatly, "It took us some time to realize that when it comes to editing skills, no one can replace the teacher. It became clear to us that, in fact, using students as editors was indeed 'the blind leading the blind' " (p. 221). They pointed out that most students could not detect errors in other students' writing, and, even if they could, they could not explain why they were incorrect. An even greater problem was that when students offered editing suggestions to their peers, they were incorrect themselves. Pianko and Radzik concluded that even though peer editing might appear to be a desirable part of the writing program, the pitfalls negated the advantages.

Even strong advocates of peer editing admitted some reservations concerning average and below-average students. In a study done by Elias (1982), a peer-editing group was found to be superior to a teacher-centered editing group. However, students selected for the study already had some ability in literate writing and had been through a demanding literature/writing program for several months prior to the study. Elias stated that further research was needed to

determine the appropriateness of peer editing for students of varied abilities. She asked, "Is peer interaction a viable teaching method for average and slower groups? Would these groups provide the same results?" (p. 21). Beaven (1977) agreed that inexperienced, unskilled evaluators often may offer inaccurate advice.

O'Donnell (1980), another advocate of peer editing, admitted that it has some potential disadvantages for slow students. "These students," she stated, "often have neither the skills nor the confidence to do extensive editing. Also, if students are not committed to improving their writing skills, editing groups will get nowhere" (p. 3).

Summary

Very few researchers have looked into the appropriateness of peer editing for elementary-school low-ability students. This is a problem that needs to be addressed as more and more writer's workshop advocates tout the extraordinary gains to be made by using peer editing and as more and more classroom teachers attempt to incorporate peer editing into their classrooms. Most researchers found no fault with the writer's workshop philosophy of peer response and, indeed, felt it to be an exciting and potentially advantageous practice during the writing process. The practice of peer response, when well-modeled ahead of time, has been generally accepted to be a valuable aid to writers of all abilities. No special skills are required, with the exception of being a good listener and having the ability to articulate feelings and ideas. Peer editing, however,

requires skills that are often non-existent in elementary-school low-ability students. They can recognize good and bad writing when they hear or read it, but they often cannot pinpoint the elements that go into it. Thus, this study focused on peer editing with elementary-school students; a secondary focus was on peer editing with low-ability students.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to describe classroom teachers' perceptions of peer editing in upper grade elementary classrooms. Data were collected by the use of taped interviews. This chapter describes the subjects who participated in the study and the methods used to collect and interpret the data.

Subjects

Six teachers were interviewed for this study: two fourth-grade, two fifth-grade, and two sixth-grade teachers from Hansen Elementary School in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Half of the teachers held master's degrees, and one of the three was pursuing a doctoral degree. The remaining three teachers had bachelor's degrees. Teaching experience ranged from one to twenty years. All six teachers taught in self-contained classrooms. Four of the six teachers had participated in a writer's workshop offered at their building. The two who had not participated were new to the district but had familiarized themselves with process writing through professional reading and conferring with their fellow teachers. Two of the teachers had part-time teacher associates (aides) who assisted during the writers' workshops with their students. Only one teacher reported having no low-ability students in the classroom. The remaining five classrooms contained a wide range of abilities and were made up of predominately Caucasian

students from middle-class backgrounds. One class had an unusual ratio of six girls to nineteen boys.

Procedure

This study was one of qualitative research. The semi-structured interview was the method of obtaining information. Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1985) recommended interviewing as an effective way to gather data because it allows a great deal of flexibility. The researcher can repeat or explain questions and may probe for additional information if the subject's responses seem too brief or vague.

Interview questions (see Appendix A) were developed after an extensive review of the literature. They explored the classroom teachers' perceptions of what they believed were the positive and negative aspects of peer editing. Questions dealing with the grouping of students, their reactions, their reading abilities, and their ability to transfer skills were asked to discover how teachers accommodate varied ability levels in the classroom during peer editing. Questions about preliminary instruction and the teacher's role during peer editing were asked to discover how teachers incorporate peer editing into their writing curriculum.

A pilot study that included one fourth-grade and one fifth-grade teacher was conducted. The pilot study was conducted to enable the researcher to become more proficient with the interviewing process and to determine the appropriateness of the interview questions. The pilot study also provided information about the length of time

required for each interview. Based on the results of this pilot study, the interview questions were not altered.

Six teachers were asked to participate in an interview concerning peer editing. All six agreed to take part in the study, and times were arranged at their convenience. Interviews ranged in length from 30 minutes to 45 minutes. They were tape recorded and later transcribed (see Appendices B - M). These transcribed interviews were examined to obtain information about how each teacher implemented peer editing into the writing curriculum and what factors about peer editing were perceived to be advantageous or ineffective. A follow-up interview was conducted later to provide teachers the opportunity to add any information they felt to be relevant and to respond to the preliminary findings.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to describe upper elementary classroom teachers' perceptions of peer editing. Specifically, how do classroom teachers deal with management and grouping? What do they perceive as the role they should play during peer editing? What are the students' reactions to peer editing? Do classroom teachers see application or transfer in students' writing because of peer editing? And, what do teachers perceive as the advantages and disadvantages of peer editing? The findings of this study are reported in two categories: (a) initial findings and (b) final findings. References to teacher responses presented in this chapter are keyed to the appended transcripts by citing the specific appendix and lines of discourse where each example is located.

Initial Findings

The six subjects were asked the same seven questions, although probing questions varied. The subjects were eager to share their expertise with and their perceptions of peer editing and its relative value during process writing workshops. The findings are discussed under each of the seven questions in this section.

1. How do you group students for peer editing?

Teachers' responses were quite varied. Grouping formats seemed to depend upon the type of structure they were comfortable with in the classroom. Two teachers used a specific group of higher-ability

students to act as editors (Appendix E, 2, 10; Appendix F, 2). One teacher used skills grouping where students with same needs met with the teacher for direct instruction before editing peers' work or a student possessing a specific skill edited the work of a student who did not (Appendix G, 6).

Four teachers chose to allow students to pick their own partners, and all agreed that this partner selection was usually based on friendship rather than ability. Two teachers had students edit papers of students sitting next to them to avoid unnecessary movement about the room (Appendix D, 2; Appendix F, 2). One of these teacher stated that she never deliberately grouped a high-ability student with a low-ability student (Appendix D, 4). These four teachers used different methods of providing partners for editing if students were all working at their own pace. Students putting their name on the board when they were ready to edit was a popular way to find a partner who was also available.

2. What kinds of preliminary activities or instruction do you do before students attempt peer editing?

All six teachers stressed teacher modeling as an important pre-editing activity. Teachers used an overhead projector or the chalkboard and demonstrated editing to the group. Teachers reported contriving their own sentences or passages containing various mechanical errors.

Four teachers mentioned Daily Oral Language as a good practice tool and felt it to be advantageous to students. Students as a whole

group received daily practice and reinforcement in detecting common errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. All four teachers said students' ability to detect these errors on the board improved throughout the year. One teacher said she uses the students' spelling text which contains a good section on proofreading. She encouraged students to use it as another tool.

Teachers also used direct instruction (mini-lessons) as an attempt to remediate recurring errors in student writing. For example, if a teacher noticed that several students were experiencing difficulty using quotation marks, these students might be pulled together briefly and taught that skill.

Pre-editing discussion included time devoted to affective concerns. Students were instructed in how to give appropriate responses and feedback to their peers, with positive attitudes and self-concept being emphasized. All teachers believed this was a crucial part of successfully implementing peer editing.

3. What is your role during peer editing?

Four teachers perceived their role as that of a circulating helper, while two said they served as a participant/peer and joined in the editing themselves (Appendix F, 22; Appendix G, 16). Management and students' individual needs for assistance were cited as primary reasons for a circulating or supervisory role by the teachers. One teacher explained that she tried editing along with the students but changed her role because students had questions and needed her help (Appendix C, 34). These teachers noted that they

could observe problem areas by circulating and pulling same-needs students together at a later time for direct instruction. One teacher who chose to edit in a peer capacity stated that she enjoyed sitting down with the students and reading their work at the same time (Appendix F, 24, 26).

Four teachers said they were the final editors if a piece was going to the publication stage. The two teachers who had teacher associates in their classrooms said the associates corrected any remaining errors during the typing of students' work (Appendix C, 18; Appendix C, 17).

4. What are the students' reactions to peer editing?

Teachers reported very little negative response or disagreement from students about peer editing. One teacher mentioned spelling as an area that caused occasional disagreement but said that students were willing to let the teacher be the final decision-maker (Appendix B, 12). The remaining five teachers agreed firmly that negativism is never a problem. These teachers mentioned the careful preparation and modeling at the beginning of their writers' workshops as the reason for their success regarding positive attitudes. Another reason was the way corrections were handled. One teacher stated that students are not allowed to mark on other students' writing at all (Appendix G, 32), and another mentioned that students don't mind neat corrections but don't want their papers "messed up" (Appendix B, 10).

All teachers stated that students enjoyed having their papers read and edited by their peers and that peer editing seemed to bring

cohesiveness and team spirit to the writing process. Students still wanted input from the teacher, however, as the final editor (Appendix E, 38).

Mixed results about the effect of ability on students' reactions to peer editing were noted. One teacher stated that higher-ability students often came to the editing conference with the attitude that their papers contained no errors (Appendix G, 38). Another teacher found lower-ability students to be reluctant to make changes on the advice of their peers (Appendix F, 30).

5. Do you see a correlation between a student's reading ability and his/her ability to do peer editing?

All teachers agreed that there was a definite positive correlation between a student's reading ability and his or her ability to detect errors in writing. However, two teachers stated that they saw occasional exceptions. One found that some good readers were not always tuned into mechanics (Appendix E, 44), and another teacher believed that often an average or lower-ability student was more careful, had better social skills, and got more accomplished during peer-editing. Higher-ability students sometimes saw themselves as infallible (Appendix G, 38).

When asked directly if lower-ability students were successful at locating an acceptable number of errors, teachers said they were not. Teachers were quick to point out, however, that lower-ability students could make a useful contribution to the editing process. They stated that these students can be taught to look for basic

errors such as capitalization and periods, or if unable to be effective in locating mechanical errors, they can write positive comments. One teacher made an interesting observation that lower-ability students often can do a good job working with younger students' writing (Appendix E, 54).

Teachers observed that the constant exposure to the writing of good students as well as the continuing focus on mechanics were beneficial to lower-ability students. Indeed, all teachers agreed that peer editing produced positive benefits for all students, including those with weak reading and writing skills.

Several teachers commented that the way they managed their writer's workshop spared the lower-ability students' feelings of being inept or ineffective. Teachers noted that since editing partners were often chosen by friendships, and that these friendships were usually children of same ability, neither was made to feel inadequate. These students were often directed to go back and edit a second time and were given input into what types of errors needed to be corrected. None of the teachers reported that low-ability students reacted negatively or were unable to participate at some level.

6. Do you see transfer or application in students' writing because of editing the writing of their peers?

This question raised much uncertainty. While all teachers agreed that they believed peer editing was beneficial, most expressed some concerns about seeing actual transfer into the students'

writing, especially for lower-ability students. One teacher saw the highest degree of transfer in the higher-ability students (Appendix C, 30). Another teacher said he did see transfer, but expressed doubts about the long-term effects. He said students are more aware of writing mechanics because of peer editing, but they do a better job detecting errors in other's writing rather than in their own. He stated emphatically that peer editing's effects on students' writing lasted longer than the effects from traditional language arts textbook instruction (Appendix G, 44, 46).

Several teachers brought up an interesting observation about transfer of skills. They noticed that students could detect errors in sentences on the board during the Daily Oral Language activities but not in real writing (Appendix C, 16; Appendix D, 30). One teacher speculated that when dealing with isolated sentences, students are only required to focus on one thought unit. Within a whole text, students are dealing with not only many more mechanical conventions but also the more sophisticated thought processes and meaning contained in paragraphs (Appendix E, 46, 50).

7. What do you perceive as the advantages and disadvantages of peer editing?

Teachers were overwhelmingly in favor of peer editing and felt the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages. Teachers mentioned the cooperative learning environment and interaction as a major advantage. Students have a real audience; they are more careful when

they know their friends will read their work. They listen to and learn from each other.

Teachers liked the idea that mechanics are being taught in a meaningful way. Students are applying these skills to aid in clarifying their own writing, not to fill in worksheets. Students have the advantage of seeing their peers' writing and their peers' mistakes and struggles. They begin to realize that everyone experiences difficulty in writing and nobody ever writes a perfect first draft. Teachers also mentioned the constant practice students receive and the intense focus on mechanics during peer editing. A final statement seemed to say it all: "Students are writing more and feeling better about writing" (Appendix G, 50).

The disadvantages mentioned mainly concerned management and time constraints, with a first-year teacher seeming to experience the most difficulty with management. She expressed concerns about losing students within the loosely-structured setting of writer's workshop, so she modified her own workshop in order to keep better track of students. She also expressed concerns about whether she was covering all the skills students needed to be taught (Appendix F, 36).

Experienced teachers admitted to a few management concerns initially but stated that each year they restructured and modified to meet the needs of a particular group. Two teachers mentioned that their teacher associates took a lot of the burden off them and freed them up to work with students (Appendix C, 18; Appendix E, 18).

Teachers without additional help in their classrooms felt that the greatest disadvantage was that they never actually got a finished product. They felt that, even when they sat down with a student for a final editing, students still failed to make all the recommended corrections. Rarely were finished papers error-free, regardless of the number of times they were edited. The time factor was a concern, with some teachers stating that peer editing took more time, but all felt the additional time required was worth it.

Final Findings

After the seven initial findings were determined, the same subjects were interviewed again and were asked to expand on a specific response of interest to the researcher and to comment on the initial findings.

Saves Time

One teacher had stated initially that peer editing saved her time. When asked to expand on this statement, she explained that since peer editing is done during the school day, she no longer has stacks of papers to correct during the evening. She also believed that since students aren't lined up waiting at her desk, peer editing is much more productive for the students as well. She expressed little surprise with the findings and declared, "I'd never go back to the old way" (Appendix H, 8).

Extra Support in the Classroom

When asked to elaborate on her statement that she had a teacher associate in her room during writer's workshop, one teacher with 29

students admitted that it would be difficult without the extra assistance. She valued the time it gave her to work with students individually but said she would trade her associate for a smaller class. She said, "I could handle twenty kids easily" (Appendix I, 8). This teacher commented that she felt reassured after hearing the initial findings. "It's good to know I'm doing things similar to other teachers and that we basically agree with each other" (Appendix I, 10).

Takes More Time

One teacher, when asked to elaborate on her initial statement that peer editing takes more time, said, "I could do their whole paper in three minutes--it takes them much longer. I have to be patient--not give them too much help--let them find the errors on their own" (Appendix J, 4). She added that the time spent was worth it. This teacher expressed concern about the finding that indicated transfer was a problem area for most teachers but reaffirmed her belief that students improved by the end of the year.

Low-Ability Partners for Peer Editing

When asked to expand on her statement that two low-ability students can be effective editing partners, one teacher gave a novel explanation. She explained that lower-ability students' writing usually is less complex and lengthy than that of higher-ability students, so these students are not so overwhelmed and can focus on basic writing conventions such as capitals, periods, and spelling. She reflected, "You'd be surprised. You know the old saying, 'Two

heads are better than one' " (Appendix K, 2). After hearing the preliminary findings, she expressed the belief that peer editing works because teachers believe in it and are dedicated to it. She said, "They expect it to work, so it does" (Appendix K, 4).

Management

One teacher initially had expressed concerns about "kids slipping through the cracks" because of her inability to keep track of each student's performance. When this point was addressed during the final questioning, she stated that even though she did not advocate use of workbooks and basals, she felt they gave more concrete and easily accessible evidence of a student's skill-development and knowledge. Record keeping was a definite problem for beginning teachers. After hearing the findings of the first interview, she commented, "I feel good that we all seem to agree on things" (Appendix L, 4). She said she intends to work harder on organization and management.

Final Editing

One teacher had stated during the initial interview that he does not do the final editing and leaves errors in students' papers. When asked to comment further, he convincingly supported his belief by stating:

I believe that a part of the writer's workshop philosophy is that this is the kids' writing. It's not mine, and it's not their peers. I'll give them suggestions or pointers, but in the final analysis, it's their writing and their responsibility to make the changes. If they choose not to, then that's their decision. (Appendix M, 2)

He went on to state that students have all the help they need to correct errors, both from their 25 peers and their teacher. He expressed concern for developing independence. He said, "It's not so much that it saves me time. It's that I refuse to do their work for them, to be a crutch all the time. They won't have that next year" (Appendix M, 4).

When asked to comment on the findings, he seemed pleased with the positive agreement among teachers. He brought out an interesting point about transfer of skills. In visiting with junior-high teachers, he had received positive feedback from them. He said, "They say they can see the positive results of writer's workshop and peer editing when the kids come over there. They notice it. That's probably the most encouraging news of all" (Appendix M, 6).

Summary

Teachers perceive peer editing to be beneficial for all students. Seven initial findings were supported and expanded during the second round of interviews. Disadvantages, such as time constraints, management, and concerns with transfer of skills, were mentioned. However, teachers overwhelmingly reported that peer editing was an integral part of their writing curriculum and that students learned more and felt better about their writing as a result of peer editing.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This chapter contains a summary of the first four chapters. Findings then are discussed, and suggestions for further research are given.

Summary

Results of this descriptive research indicate that upper elementary classroom teachers believe peer editing to be a valuable aid in the teaching of writing, specifically in the area of mechanics. Six teachers were interviewed for this study. Two taught fourth grade, two taught fifth grade, and two taught sixth grade. A pilot study was conducted with one fourth-grade and one fifth-grade teacher.

This study of how upper elementary classroom teachers perceive the practice of peer editing during the writing process produced the following findings:

1. Classroom teachers generally allowed students to choose their own editing partners. These choices were usually based on social relationships rather than academic ability.

2. Teacher modeling to the whole class by use of meaningful text on an overhead projector or chalkboard was the unanimous method of preparing students for peer editing. Additional methods employed were use of the proofreading sections of textbooks and the Daily Oral Language activities common to the entire building.

3. Most teachers saw their role as that of a circulating helper/supervisor and final editor. Two teachers took on the role of a peer and edited along with the students.

4. All teachers believed that their students reacted positively to peer editing and mentioned very little difficulty with disagreements, cooperation, or attitude. Students enjoyed working with one another's writing.

5. Teachers unanimously perceived the better readers as being more able to edit effectively. However, one teacher pointed out that average or lower-ability students might have better social skills than higher-ability students who may see themselves as infallible. These average to low-ability students might be more effective peer editors than higher-ability students at times.

6. Teachers were unsure about transfer or application of writing mechanics because of peer editing. They expressed concerns that students could edit effectively in isolation during the Daily Oral Language activities on the chalkboard but often failed to apply their skills during their own writing or during the editing of other's writing. Teachers agreed that students could usually spot errors in other's writing better than in their own. One teacher saw some carry-over in students' writing but questioned how long it lasted. One teacher observed that, regardless of the degree of transfer with peer editing, it was definitely higher than with teaching editing from a textbook.

7. All six teachers enthusiastically supported peer editing. They mentioned student involvement and interaction as important advantages. Students were focused and were editing meaningful text rather than worksheets. Students valued the feedback of their peers and, thus, were more careful. Teachers were free to circulate and assist rather than having students line up at their desk for help. And most importantly, students were writing more.

The most frequent disadvantages mentioned were classroom management, time constraints, and the fact that lower-ability students had difficulty locating errors both in their own and in other's writing. However, teachers still believed that peer editing was beneficial to all students, including those with lower ability.

Discussion

Teachers participating in the interviews were enthusiastic about peer editing and eager to share their ideas and concerns. While not all teachers structured the peer-editing process the same way, all offered valid reasons for doing what they did. Many of the differences appeared to exist because of personal preference and past experience. All teachers agreed on the most important issues. They all perceived peer editing to be valuable for all students and superior to the grammar and mechanics instruction offered in language arts textbooks.

One unexpected finding emerged from this study. Teachers indicated that lower-ability students can participate effectively during peer editing, and they stated that these students benefited

and demonstrated growth along with higher-ability students. While admitting that lower-ability students could not locate errors as effectively, none of the teachers believed that peer editing was inappropriate for them, and in fact, the teachers thought these students learned more and had better self-concepts as a result.

While this study contained a small sample of classroom teachers, results indicate teachers to be very supportive of peer editing. They perceive it to be beneficial and appropriate for all students and more effective and long-lasting than the standard instruction given by use of textbooks. Teachers cited two main reasons for using peer editing: (a) students learn from real writing rather than from contrived, isolated examples, and (b) students are involved with and excited about one another's writing.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to describe teachers' perceptions of peer editing in upper elementary classrooms.

Correcting papers has always been a time-consuming, often discouraging, chore for teachers. Having their papers corrected has also been a negative experience for many students. The pleasure and excitement of writing is often negated by the knowledge that one's audience is a teacher holding a red pen. Grammar and writing-mechanics instruction, as taught with a textbook and worksheets, have long been perceived by students as meaningless drudgery and by teachers as a necessary evil that they are responsible for imparting to students.

Recent research concerning cooperative learning and reciprocal teaching would suggest that students may learn best from other students when material is presented in a meaningful way. Reading and editing the writing of one's peers would certainly appear to meet those criteria.

Implications from this study suggest some basic practices which should prove effective for classroom teachers who are considering peer editing for their students. First, teachers should spend a good deal of time initially with the modeling process. They need to demonstrate how to locate errors and also how to give constructive criticism and positive feedback. This beginning activity appeared to be a major component in the success of the peer-editing process and would lend itself well to a more in-depth study. Second, teachers should allow students to choose their editing partners and be flexible about visiting and movement about the room. Third, teachers' expectations for low-ability students should be appropriate. These students can contribute to and benefit from peer editing, although perhaps not to the degree of higher-ability students. Finally, teachers will need to make adjustments or modifications of the peer-editing process, depending on the make-up of a particular class and the teacher's personal preference.

The elementary school selected for this study is considered to be a "whole language/writer's workshop" building and is known for advancing new or innovative methods of instruction. Many teachers from this building hold or are pursuing advanced degrees and are very

supportive and enthusiastic about the latest education research concerning reading and writing. It may be that teacher attitude and their on-going professional development influenced the outcome of this study. Further research needs to be done in a more traditional setting. Also, because this research contained a limited sample of interviews, further research with a larger sample is needed to discover whether these findings are representative of other upper elementary classroom teachers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaire

1. How do you group students for peer editing?
2. What kinds of preliminary activities or instruction do you do before students attempt peer editing?
3. What is your role during peer editing?
4. What are the students' reactions to peer editing?
5. Do you see a correlation between a student's reading ability and his/her ability to do peer editing?
6. Do you see transfer or application in students' writing because of editing the writing of their peers?
7. What do you perceive as the advantages and disadvantages of peer editing?

Appendix B

- 1 HOW DO YOU GROUP STUDENTS FOR PEER EDITING?
- 2 First of all, I have them go over it themselves. After they have finished their work, I have them sit back, and I tell them, "You're the first reader of this publication, and I want you to go through it and see how it sounds. Sort of finish up revision and make sure it's the way you want it. The first time through, read it and see how you like it. Now go through, scrutinize, check out the basics, periods, etc. Do the best you can to find any corrections that need to be made." From there we move into partners, chosen at random, and it's just one on one, and you're doing the proof-reading for that person. You're exchanging with that person. Then, usually I like to have at least one other person after that do it. And there's a couple of different ways. They could just exchange with a different partnership. So now that's three people that have proof-read it. Or bring your paper up to the table, and start with all the papers on the table, or pass them all out so that you don't have your own paper. My main goal is to proofread other papers. They can write comments on these papers.
- 3 WHAT KIND OF PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU DONE BEFORE YOU ATTEMPT TO DO THIS?
- 4 In their spelling book there is a proofreading section, and each week part of their assignment is to go over this section. I do some teacher modeling. Our daily oral language is helpful in that direction. We look at sentences that need corrections, and we all talk about the corrections that need to be made.
- 5 WHAT IS YOUR ROLE DURING PEER EDITING?
- 6 I supervise.
- 7 DO YOU HAVE THE FINAL SAY? DO YOU RE-EDIT EVERYONE'S PAPERS FOR THE FINAL TIME?
- 8 I am the final proofreader.
- 9 WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS' REACTIONS TO PEER EDITING?
- 10 Kids don't mind their peers writing on their papers as long as they don't mess them up. If you find a misspelled word, you may correct their spelling. Put in whatever corrections need to be made. Then make a comment like "check your spelling," or "good job," and then your initials. Then bring it back up to the table and take another one.

- 11 DO YOU EVER GET DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EDITOR AND THE WRITER AS TO WHO'S CORRECT?
- 12 Yes, once in a while. Usually it's questioning the spelling of a word.
- 13 DO YOU SEE A CORRELATION BETWEEN A STUDENT'S READING ABILITY AND HIS/HER ABILITY TO DO PEER EDITING?
- 14 Yes, there is a definite correlation. Your better reader is usually your better writer. Problems with the way a less capable student might fit in are eliminated by the way I do it--where papers are handled at-random off the table. I don't really see low ability students as being a problem.
- 15 IF YOU ONLY EDIT THE PAPERS ONE TIME, WOULD LOW ABILITY STUDENTS BE ABLE TO CORRECT AND RECOGNIZE ERRORS?
- 16 Basically, no.
- 17 CAN THEY DETECT THEM IN THEIR OWN WRITING?
- 18 No.
- 19 YOU WOULD ADVOCATE HAVING MORE THAN ONE EDITOR?
- 20 Yes. I personally don't like one kid being stuck with the editing job for the whole day, anyway.
- 21 DO YOU SEE ANY BENEFIT FOR THE LOW-ABILITY KIDS OF ATTEMPTING EDITING?
- 22 Yes, attempting is it. The more you attempt something, the better you will become. It's better for their self concept. Even the low-ability kids might have certain strengths in some areas.
- 23 DO YOU SEE TRANSFER OR APPLICATION IN STUDENTS' WRITING BECAUSE OF EDITING THE WRITING OF THEIR PEERS?
- 24 Yes, it's a contributing factor. I've been doing this for a long, long time.
- 25 WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PEER EDITING?

- 26 The advantages are the focus. Kids are involved, thinking, communicating, and interacting. These are all key goals. The disadvantages are some kids won't give as helpful suggestions as the teacher would. And some don't actively participate as well as others. That's why I need to supervise.
- 27 DOES IT SAVE TIME?
- 28 Yes.

Appendix C

- 1 HOW DO YOU GROUP STUDENTS FOR PEER EDITING?
- 2 I have the students choose their own peer editor. I have them write their name on the board--if they need to edit, they write their name under the word "edit," and then they choose somebody who is ready for editing at that time, too.
- 3 YOU MEAN, TO EXCHANGE PAPERS.
- 4 Right. Joey's on the board. He wants to edit. Tommy goes up there, and they get together then because they're both at that same stage in writing. Sometimes it's hard to go and ask someone to edit when they're working. And another thing that will happen is that they will choose the same one, and then this poor kid never gets anything done. So they choose their own from who is ready to edit or revise or whatever.
- 5 WHEN THEY'RE DOING THAT, WHAT DO YOU DO IF THEY DON'T CHOOSE A SPECIFIC PERSON BECAUSE THEY KNOW HE/SHE IS NOT A GOOD EDITOR, OR HE/SHE HAS LOWER SKILLS? DO THEY GRAVITATE TO THE BETTER STUDENTS AS EDITORS USUALLY?
- 6 Some do, but not really. I think if you leave it all on their own, they go to their friends.
- 7 LET'S JUST SAY TWO LOWER-ABILITY KIDS WANT TO BE PARTNERS. DO YOU SEE ANY BENEFITS AS TO WHAT THEY CAN DO TOGETHER AS FAR AS FINDING EACH OTHER'S ERRORS?
- 8 I think so. I think there is always a benefit. I think they're always bound to know something in that paper. They miss a lot, and I'll have them go back and do it again. And then if they feel that they have exhausted all of their efforts, then they choose somebody else because there are quite a few mistakes they need to work on. You know, the ones that are obvious, nothing real big.
- 9 SO THEY MIGHT GO TO ANOTHER EDITOR THEN?
- 10 Yes. I'll ask them to choose somebody else.
- 11 YOU DON'T PAIR OFF A GOOD STUDENT AND A POOR STUDENT?
- 12 No.
- 13 WHAT KINDS OF PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES OR INSTRUCTION DO YOU DO BEFORE STUDENTS BEGIN PEER EDITING?

- 14 I have the daily oral language that we do everyday that I think is good. We have mini lessons on something if I see a lot of mistakes. Like long sentences seems to be one thing that the kids do. They just keep doing it, so we'll talk about long sentences. As a group or if there is a problem when I edit with them, then I write it down--I look back and see that a student had long sentences for quite a few times, so I sit down and talk to her individually and say--here's a pattern, maybe we will be conscious of that in our next writing, and I'll do that type of thing, too. I try to model all of these things.
- 15 DO YOU EVER USE THE STUDENTS' WRITING BY PUTTING IT UP ON THE OVERHEAD?
- 16 I've never used somebody else's writing, no. I write my own paragraph and put my own errors in. I think one of the problems is we do daily oral language on the board, and editing is done on a paper where it's written out. I'm going to try to get those types of mistakes on a paper. Maybe it will be easier for them to go from. Maybe they would see their mistakes. Unless you pinpoint it, they'll miss it on their own. It's like they know it, but it has to be pointed out to them.
- 17 WHAT IS YOUR ROLE DURING PEER EDITING?
- 18 I circulate around the room. The last step is they come to me, and we edit together. Diane, my aide, works with them in revising, and then they come to me after their peer editing. I have an aide because of the number of kids I have. She does the revising. They write their story, and they revise it on their own. And they go to the aide with maybe three or four other kids. She basically helps them make changes. When it gets to me all I have to do is the final edit.
- 19 WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS' REACTIONS TO PEER EDITING? DO YOU EVER GET KIDS THAT DISAGREE OR FEEL PUT DOWN BY WHAT THE OTHER KIDS FIND?
- 20 I don't get so many put-downs because at the beginning of the year we really try hard to let it be known that this is their story. We have to use constructive criticism. It's their paper. If they don't want it to be changed or they don't feel it needs to be changed, it's their decision. And then they come to me, and we'll talk about why that other person is right or they're right.
- 21 WHAT ABOUT THE MECHANICS?
- 22 I am sure there are arguments about it, but I have the final say.

- 23 DO THE KIDS MARK ON EACH OTHERS' PAPERS? HAVE YOU HAD A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
- 24 No, I have not had a problem with that. They use a pen to write on other papers. We use pencil to write our papers.
- 25 DO YOU SEE A CORRELATION BETWEEN A STUDENT'S READING ABILITY AND HIS/HER ABILITY TO EDIT.
- 26 Yes, the better readers are the better editors.
- 27 DO POOR WRITERS GO TO THE STRONG STUDENTS BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT THIS ONE IS GOING TO FIND ALL THEIR ERRORS?
- 28 No. They don't have much of a choice with the names on the board. Maybe Nick's name is not up there. They have to pick who's up there.
- 29 DO YOU SEE TRANSFER OR APPLICATION IN STUDENTS' WRITING BECAUSE OF EDITING THE WRITING OF THEIR PEERS?
- 30 Some do apply it. You know the students that are aware. They're going to notice it. Some aren't. The better readers are the ones who notice it. There's a definite correlation with the mechanics. That's not to say that the poor readers can't come up with some marvelous stories.
- 31 WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PEER EDITING?
- 32 I think there are more advantages than disadvantages, except that they can see other mistakes faster than they can see their own. They've written their story, and they think it's right. They don't have any mistakes. Then, they read something fresh and new--they're aware of what they're looking for. They're better at finding other kid's mistakes.
I think they develop good language skills during it, and I think it's applying what they know instead of the worksheet type thing. I think it's the best way to go about teaching the language skills.
- 33 IS THE MANAGEMENT PART OF THIS DIFFICULT TO HANDLE?
- 34 Yes, that was one thing I worked all year on. There's always something you want to change. With two people, my aide can revise. I find that I have to be walking around the room. I used to edit too, and the kids had questions. I needed to always be available.

Appendix D

- 1 HOW DO YOU GROUP STUDENTS FOR PEER EDITING?
- 2 I usually group them by how they're sitting in the classroom. I don't want kids moving all over the classroom. I find it's better if I don't say "Choose your own" because you get friendships. It's not a bad thing, but it's not as effective.
- 3 DO YOU HAVE A SPECIFIC REASON FOR EVER PAIRING UP TWO KIDS?
- 4 No, I don't like pairing up, say, a lower ability kid with an intelligent child.
- 5 WHAT KIND OF PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES OR INSTRUCTION DO YOU DO BEFORE STUDENTS ATTEMPT PEER EDITING?
- 6 In the beginning I have a transparency that I put up. I am the peer editor.
- 7 WHOSE WRITING ARE YOU USING?
- 8 I made up something. We went through all the different mechanics, and I showed them how I would edit, with proper markings, etc.
- 9 DO KIDS MARK ON OTHER KIDS' PAPERS?
- 10 Yes, I find you learn a lot by doing it. Kids were doing each others at the same time, but they both should do one and then the other. I was unaware they were doing it that way.
- 11 WHAT'S WRONG WITH DOING IT THAT WAY?
- 12 I think both people should focus on one paper at the same time. That way they each know why the corrections were made.
- 13 HOW MANY STUDENTS SEE THE PIECE? DO THEY PASS THEM AROUND?
- 14 Just a partner sees the editing, besides myself.
- 15 WHAT IS YOUR ROLE DURING PEER EDITING?
- 16 My role is a helper, an editor if there is an uneven number of kids, or listening. I have sat down with kids and helped them through the process in the beginning. I do a final edit with the student if it's for publication.
- 17 WHAT ARE THE KIDS' REACTIONS TO PEER EDITING?

- 18 They like it because it's unstructured.
- 19 DO YOU GET ANY NEGATIVE REACTION WHEN SOMEONE POINTS OUT THEIR ERRORS TO THEM.
- 20 I never do--that's because you have talked about everything that might come up. You work so hard so there's a positive attitude. If there is a disagreement, they will come to me and ask what it should be. I have had kids come to me and ask me to go over their paper because they want a final copy, and they want it right.
- 21 DOES PEER EDITING SAVE YOU WORK?
- 22 No, it takes more time.
- 23 DO YOU SEE A CORRELATION BETWEEN THE STUDENTS' READING ABILITY AND ABILITY TO DO PEER EDITING?
- 24 Absolutely, the higher the reading ability, the more able they are to pick out errors.
- 25 ARE STUDENTS HAVING THE SAME PARTNER ALL THE TIME.
- 26 Never, they're always changing.
- 27 DO YOU ASK KIDS TO TRY TO FIND THEIR OWN ERRORS BEFORE THEY GIVE IT TO A PEER?
- 28 No, that comes with revision, I think.
- 29 NOT FOR CONTENT I MEAN--JUST FOR EDITING MECHANICS?
- 30 Yes, I have them edit themselves and then exchange, and then I do final edit, especially if it's for publication. Kids don't do a very good job as far as revision. I can take a sentence out of their paper, and they can't find the errors, but if I put it on the blackboard, they can spot it right away.
- 31 DO YOU SEE TRANSFER OR APPLICATION IN THE STUDENTS' WRITING BECAUSE OF EDITING OF THEIR PEERS?
- 32 I don't know. They're better than they were at the beginning. Peer editing helps to focus in. Lower ability kids get better, too.
- 33 WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PEER EDITING?

34 Advantages are they focus in on writing and on mechanics. They get the opportunity to see other kids' writing, other kids' mistakes, working together. As for disadvantages, I still don't get the finished product.

35 HOW MUCH TIME DOES PEER EDITING TAKE?

36 About ten minutes, sitting one to one.

37 HOW MUCH TIME ARE THE KIDS ALLOWED?

38 As long as it takes.

Appendix E

- 1 HOW DO YOU GROUP STUDENTS FOR PEER EDITING?
- 2 Well, I have them get help from other friends in the classroom. Sometimes there are volunteer editors when we first start this who have felt comfortable at that--and they volunteer to help, so that if a student needs help they can go to that person. So that, for starters, seems to work pretty well. And then they can also work in pairs. Let's say there's a small group working on their stories, or they've shared their story with each other--then within that small group of three or four, they might choose one of those kids to help them edit their story if they're going to publish it.
- 3 ANY FEEDBACK FROM THE STUDENTS WHO VOLUNTEER TO BE EDITORS? DO THEY LIKE IT? DO THEY FEEL PUT UPON?
- 4 No, I think for the kids that volunteer, they feel comfortable and really enjoy doing that. They really get a kick out of it and really do it well.
- 5 THEN IT'S SELF-SELECTION? THEY CAN PICK WHO THEY WANT TO EDIT WITH?
- 6 Right, pretty much.
- 7 DO YOU FIND THERE'S A PATTERN ABOUT PARTNER SELECTION? IS IT BECAUSE THEY'RE FRIENDS, OR IS IT BECAUSE THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP THEM?
- 8 I think if you let them totally self-select, it's more or less going to be a friend that they feel comfortable with.
- 9 IT DOESN'T HAVE MUCH TO DO WITH ABILITY?
- 10 Well [pause] -- Some of that, but often times their friends tend to have about the same ability. So when you start out and develop this core of kids who volunteer to be the editors, then it's not as self-selective, and they would go to these people.
- 11 INITIALLY YOU HAVE THIS GROUP OF VOLUNTEER EDITORS, OR IS THAT LATER ON?
- 12 No, I've done it different ways different years, but that's a--I have tried it that way where you have a group of peer editors start out. And then what you do is there's the large group--that's the entire class. And then I work with them individually,

one on one. And then when I go to the next step, then there are volunteer editors that they can go to when they need help.

13 WHAT KINDS OF PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES OR INSTRUCTION DO YOU DO BEFORE STUDENTS ATTEMPT PEER EDITING?

14 First what I do is model for them--like we work as a class and I try to model for them ways to edit pieces. And we've done large group things, we've done small group things, and then I've worked with them one on one--so the peer editing doesn't really happen in my room for a couple of months till we're into the writing process. Oh, one example would be, when we have our daily language in the morning--when we first start the school year out--we have, you know, the sentences we put on the board. Then later, what I do, starting after maybe the first month/6 weeks of school, is I would put a longer piece up on the board--a larger chunk, like a paragraph--then we would go through that and proofread that together.

15 WHAT IS YOUR ROLE DURING PEER EDITING?

16 I'm usually working with other kids.

17 DO YOU DO A FINAL EDITING ON EVERYBODY'S PAPER?

18 My associate, the typist, would. If the piece is going to publication, then she would clean up some little things. They can't. At first it's real difficult for them to find everything.

19 OKAY, THIS IS NOT A FORMAL, STRUCTURED QUESTION--BUT IT'S COME UP WITH TEACHERS--IS MANAGEMENT A PROBLEM FOR YOU?

20 Not really, because you see a productive buzz going on, and so if there's anyone messing around, you just handle that on a personal basis. No, I think it's always a productive time.

21 YOU DON'T FEEL THAT THEY'RE OFF-TASK OR JUST SOCIALIZING?

22 There are times when that happens, sure, but that's just part of the whole picture, and so if you squelch that--a lot of times out of their conversation they get story ideas, and they start talking about something and so you can't let it go on day after day, but there are days when they may be talking over a story plot, so it's just a natural thing to visit. But--no--I don't find that a problem. It's not like a worksheet where you can go over and check--Are they on item 5? It's a looser deal, but I think they get so much out of it that it's worth the trade-off.

23 OKAY. ABOUT HOW LONG DOES THIS EDITING PROCESS TAKE?

- 24 I would say it varies, depending on the length of the piece they're working at--anywhere from five to fifteen minutes. If it gets much beyond ten or fifteen minutes, that would say they're probably getting into a level over their heads or too in-depth.
- 25 OKAY, DISREGARDING THE EDITORS' GROUP THAT MIGHT BE THERE AT ANY GIVEN TIME, IF THEY'RE GOING TO DO PARTNER EDITING, HOW DOES THAT WORK? THEY EXCHANGE PAPERS? AND THEN, DO THEY USE THE EDITING SYMBOLS?
- 26 I've taught them some of them. I suppose they don't know all of them, but usually it's like--one child has a story and needs help that day. Sometimes I suppose they both might want help, but I'd say more often the way I've seen it happen is that they need it that day for their story. They're at that point, and two friends could sit down and do that, but usually the one who needs the help seeks out the person to help edit his piece.
- 27 DOES HE GIVE HIS PAPER TO THAT PERSON TO READ AND TO LOCATE ERRORS, OR DO THEY SIT AND DO IT TOGETHER?
- 28 Well, I try to model for them how you sit down and do it together. And how you both sit down on the same side of the table, and you're both looking at it. Then we'd read it together, out loud. The person can read it to you, and that helps them, too--to hear their own voice. If they've heard it out loud--and the kid should have already read it to the wall--that's that phrase Sharon Moore uses. In other words, you would have read it out loud ahead of time and hopefully caught some of that yourself. And once in a while, too, kids will give it to someone else to read ahead--and then they could've looked it over, and then sat down with them.
- 29 DO YOU DO A FINAL EDIT? YOU SAID YOUR ASSOCIATE WILL PICK UP ANY OF THE REMAINING ERRORS THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN LOCATED. SO, IS IT ONLY EDITED ONE TIME?
- 30 They go through it once, another friend goes through it, and I like to go through it, too.
- 31 AND THEN YOU LIKE TO PICK OUT ANY GLARING ERRORS?
- 32 I wouldn't try to pick a lot out at that point, unless there was a consistent problem.
- 33 DO YOU EVER DO A SKILL THING, WHERE YOU'RE SEEING EVERYBODY IS MISSING SOMETHING?
- 34 Yes, the mini lessons.

35 WHENEVER YOU SEE THE NEED FOR IT?

36 Yes.

37 WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS' REACTIONS TO PEER EDITING?

38 I think it's a mixed bag because some of them still want the adult in the situation to check it out, too. They like to have the other kids in the room look at it, but the reassurance that someone else has looked at it is needed, too.

39 DO THEY EVER DISAGREE, LIKE "HE SAID THIS IS WRONG."

40 No, I never had this happen. I'm not sure they're able to define their decisions that well.

41 SO, YOU'RE SAYING THEY WOULD TRUST THEIR PEER MORE SO THAN THEY WOULD THEMSELVES?

42 Yes, they probably would seek out one who is pretty good at it, so that they trust their judgment.

43 DO YOU SEE A CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' READING ABILITY AND THEIR ABILITY TO PEER EDIT?

44 Yes, as a general rule. There are a few exceptions to that, a few who are very good readers but don't tune into the mechanics that well. But as a general rule, the better reader is going to be able to pick up on things in print.

45 DO YOU SEE TRANSFER OR APPLICATION IN STUDENTS' WRITING BECAUSE OF EDITING THE WRITING OF THEIR PEERS?

46 There are a few kids who have a lot of difficulty, even at the end of the year in a whole text. They can pick it out really well in the daily oral language type of things. I think the flow of the language and what the kid is saying--if a child has a complicated thought process and it isn't punctuated--and they're trying to figure out what this child wrote. It's pretty sophisticated sometimes to be able to do that. But, I hope there's transfer after the time we spend on it. I think the daily language is fantastic for the sentences. They can pick out lots and lots of things in these.

47 WHY CAN KIDS DO IT ON THE BOARD AND NOT IN REAL WRITING? I'VE HEARD THIS A LOT.

48 Teachers don't know why they can't do it in real writing when they can do it on the board.

49 WHY ISN'T THERE TRANSFER THERE?

50 Well, for one thing there are just a couple of isolated sentences, and so it's a lot easier just to concentrate on those one or two sentences. And when you have a whole piece of writing, you have the whole thought process, --and if the child who wrote it isn't as clear, and they don't understand--and just the length of it, sentence structure--it may be more difficult.

51 WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PEER EDITING?

52 Whenever kids work together they learn from each other, they take pride in doing it, they want to be some sort of an expert, and they want to be looked on as being able to do it. They concentrate more when they're looking at someone else's, trying to help them. I think when they become the editor and/or the expert, they do think more carefully.

I think they listen to each other, and I think they grow just by working with each other. And there are some social benefits that come from it, too. Some kids get a new acknowledgment of expertise that they never even knew that they had, and so for some kids, it's kind of a positive stroke for them. Just the fact that they practice it more, work together.

53 HAVE YOU EVER HAD A CHILD THAT CAN'T DO IT BECAUSE THEY'RE SO LOW-SKILLED? OR CAN THEY MAKE SOME CONTRIBUTION?

54 They can always find something that they can be successful at if you start out simple, say looking for capitals, all the periods--if you start out at that level and move on to the more sophisticated things. But a nice opportunity for that person would be to help younger people do their editing work.

55 SO YOU SEE LIKE ABILITIES SEEKING OUT ONE ANOTHER FOR EDITING HELP?

56 I think it kind of turns out that way. If one has one particular strong point, you could have a child ask for their assistance in that area, which will boost their ego.

57 DOES PEER EDITING SAVE YOU TIME OR WORK?

58 It does, and it doesn't. You're using the same amount of time only using it in different ways. The whole role of the teacher shifts, and so you aren't the magic writing god. You don't spend hours going over these things. You're teaching the children individually and in a group how to do these things. You're using

your time differently, but you're still spending the same, if not more, time. And it's so individualized.

You don't use less time in the writing process, you spend more. You're always trying to see another level they could go to. There's such a range of writing ability. I have a little girl who wrote and typed a 32-page story and edited it all herself, probably on a sixth or seventh grade level. And then I have children who don't even put in capitals and periods, more on a first grade level. So you have this big range and you're trying to take each child to their next higher level.

59 ANY OTHER COMMENTS ABOUT WORKING WITH DIFFERENT ABILITIES DURING PEER EDITING?

60 I think it's a neat process, and anything good is never easy. It's a whole developmental thing, and I feel like I'm still learning a lot about this every day. I've done this now for three years, but each year is different. Each year you try new things, you modify it--no two years are the same. I think we're all refining what we feel works for a particular group or for us. But I think the payoff is tremendous, and there's just a whole lot of benefit. I would say one of the problems for me personally is consistently finding the time because I feel we do so much language in the classroom. But sometimes I don't structure it in everyday, and the kids really miss that.

Appendix F

- 1 HOW DO YOU GROUP STUDENTS FOR PEER EDITING?
- 2 I don't do a lot of small groups. A lot of what I do is if we've done a piece of work, we try to have it all finished at the same time. People can start a new project if they're done, and then we just take 45 minutes as a class and just take one person's, read and edit it, and give them ideas. And then you pass it on, and you get another person's. If I do something like partner editing, I pair people together. Sometimes it's just at random who you want to be paired with. I know sometimes it's not as effective for me. Usually with partner editing, I have a few master proofers--about five or six--I'll say it needs to go to them before it comes to me. These are the ones that I know their writing, I know their abilities. There are kids whose papers look like they haven't even been looked at. See, that's a lot of what I don't want.
- 3 WITH THIS OTHER METHOD, THEY PASS THEM TO THE WHOLE CLASS?
- 4 Basically.
- 5 AND THEN DO THEY WRITE COMMENTS?
- 6 They write comments--comments like ideas, proof-reading, punctuation, editing.
- 7 DO THEY SIGN OR IS IT ANONYMOUS?
- 8 Usually, for the strict editing, punctuation, capitalization, mechanics, etc. they use a different color pen, and they make a note on it. It's still the writer's responsibility. It could be an incorrect editing job that they've done, and it's still your responsibility if it's something that doesn't look like it's spelled right. Just circle it and initial it.
- 9 DO EDITORS DO THAT RIGHT ON THEIR WRITING OR DO THEY USE A SEPARATE PIECE OF PAPER?
- 10 Yes, both. A lot of times on a separate sheet of paper for their comments because the writers want feedback.
- 11 DO YOU EVER HAVE CERTAIN PEOPLE ACT AS EDITORS FOR THE LARGE GROUP?
- 12 I really hesitate because I don't want them to feel like, "I'm always editing for someone else, and I don't have time to write." I don't want them to feel like the work is always on them because

most kids don't really relish proof-reading or editing. They like to read over it and get ideas, comment and stuff, for the fun of it. They don't really like having to correct. That's why I really hesitate to choose editors or have just certain people do the editing. The thing that's worked best is to have the whole class do it. And that way, if you're a person who can't ever find mistakes, you have the whole class go through it.

13 HOW MANY KIDS DO YOU HAVE IN YOUR ROOM?

14 Nineteen.

15 SO, LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. ARE YOU SAYING EACH PAPER GETS READ 19 TIMES?

16 I would say probably it's been read carefully ten times because at some point, if you're busy reading a paper and someone's done with theirs, you just pass it on. Otherwise you get a big pile up on one person's desk.

17 SO EACH PAPER IS NOT NECESSARILY READ 19 TIMES?

18 I would say, a good 15 or 16 times, but really proofread and read real carefully, probably about 10 times.

19 OKAY, LET'S GO ON. WHAT KINDS OF PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES OR INSTRUCTION DO YOU DO BEFORE STUDENTS ATTEMPT TO PEER EDIT?

20 Well, one of the big things is daily oral language that we do up on the board together. They've really gotten very efficient at that. Another thing is, I put examples on the overhead or on the board of fictitious work. I make deliberate errors and then say, "Let's go through this together." Also, I'll work on specific skill strategies. Hopefully by the end of the year, we'll have covered enough of them. I don't use my language book because I really don't like it. I don't like the fact that they're underlining subjects twice and predicates once and putting in a slash. You never do that in real life. So I just threw it out.

21 WHAT IS YOUR ROLE DURING PEER EDITING?

22 When we're doing it as a whole class, passing papers from person to person, I'm one of the peers. I edit with them.

23 ARE YOU THE LAST ONE TO SEE THE PAPER?

24 No, I don't have any particular place where I like to go. I like to do it because it gives me a chance to sit down and relax and enjoy the kids' stories just like everybody else. It also gives

me time to actually edit--and they do the work, too. It's not just "Pass it to the teacher to edit."

- 25 WOULD YOU PARTICULARLY RESERVE THAT TIME TO GO THROUGH SOME OF YOUR POORER STUDENT'S WRITING, RATHER THAN JUST RANDOM--WHATEVER COMES YOUR WAY?
- 26 No, I just take them the way everybody else is getting them. And then I'll target them out later and say, "Let's go ahead and conference today."
- 27 WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS' REACTIONS TO PEER EDITING?
- 28 I've never seen anyone get argumentative about it. They appreciate the help. We have what we call "help sessions" once a week for about 25 minutes. If anyone's having a problem, they ask the group. It's not that the group tells them what to write, but it's just peers helping peers. I know I need that kind of thing when I write. It gives the whole class a feeling of cohesiveness. I think they really enjoy it. And it really is helpful.
- 29 DO YOU SEE A CORRELATION BETWEEN A STUDENT'S READING ABILITY AND HIS/HER ABILITY TO DO PEER EDITING?
- 30 If someone is a strong reader, then they're a much more effective editor. And they also accept criticism more effectively as "ideas" from other people, or "questions." Someone who's a poor reader doesn't always see that his ideas aren't written very well, and he doesn't change them. And at the same time, they have difficulty editing. They don't pick out little things like the grammar. They're not as likely to pick up on spelling errors, or punctuation. That's what I see anyway.
- 31 SO, CAN A LOW-ABILITY STUDENT EDIT A GOOD WRITER'S PAPER?
- 32 Well, usually with doing it with the whole class, we all have some strengths, and the weak person might find a missing period or [pause] -- I mean, they can do something, and they've contributed. Even if they just comment on a paper, at least they feel they've had a part.
- 33 DO YOU SEE TRANSFER OR APPLICATION AFTER STUDENTS HAVE BEEN EDITING THE WRITING OF THEIR PEERS?
- 34 I think so, definitely. I don't know if mechanically you're going to see any incredible change, but just as if I, the teacher, model something several times for them, that's going to increase the quality of their product. The more good writing

they see, it's bound to have an effect. If six, seven, eight good, good stories go by you, you begin to see the pattern. Sometimes though, they just have so much fun in writing, they can't tell the difference between good or bad. I sense that, anyway. It's like, "This is a fun story," but how much sense does it make? And that's generally a lot of the kids, not just the poor writers. They can't discriminate yet.

35 WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PEER EDITING?

36 One thing for me that's difficult is I don't have the control and can't keep track of where kids are as much. With peer editing, I think it's real easy for kids to slip through the cracks, and especially as a first year teacher, I've got so many other things on my mind. I'm sure if I were more organized, I'm sure there are ways to work around it and keep up with it, but I feel there are kids who slip through without the structure. You wonder--are you covering all you need to cover by not using an English or language book? We don't have a book in front of us telling us what to do or say. So, that's why we all start our stories at the same time--so I can model things--we talk through it, we all have to be done with our story at the same time, and we all edit at the same time--at least the final editing, because when we had it where you start a story whenever you feel like it, I had no idea where anyone was--I couldn't keep track of things. I didn't feel good about it at all. And even now, I still feel like I'm losing kids. But there's good there. They feel good about their writing. They have a sense of accomplishment, and their work has meaning to it. Kids get excited about it. And when we pass papers around, kids know it's editing time, not visiting time, and I feel like I have more control than if they go off with a partner or small group. So I guess how to manage it is the biggest problem.

Appendix G

- 1 HOW DO YOU GROUP STUDENTS FOR PEER EDITING?
- 2 Well, most of the time they self-select their own grouping. During our conferencing time, they'll self-select an editor.
- 3 HOW DO THEY CHOOSE AN EDITOR? IS IT A FRIEND? SOMEONE AT THEIR ACADEMIC LEVEL?
- 4 They pick someone they're comfortable with. It seems that they often pick someone on the basis of social relationship rather than on the basis of say, reading level. Um [pause]. Other types of peer editing groups I base on content similarity. If they're working on similar stuff, I'll pull them together. And then the mechanics--if there is a group of students that needs a specific thing done about mechanics, I'll do that.
- 5 YOU'LL GROUP THEM YOURSELF THEN?
- 6 Yes. I can do that in various ways. One is a one-to-one with me. I'll call up a student. Or I'll pair up students, one who has that skill and one who needs work on it. Or I'll pull together four or five students and give a short lesson on that skill.
- 7 DO YOU EVER HAVE A SPECIAL EDITING TEAM THAT ALL THE KIDS GO TO?
- 8 No, I've not done that. I've seen that. It's interesting.
- 9 WHAT KINDS OF PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES OR INSTRUCTION DO YOU DO BEFORE STUDENTS ATTEMPT TO PEER EDIT?
- 10 Modeling has been most successful, where I have a student come up and we work together or role-play about the kinds of editing questions you can ask--and weaknesses and strengths, how to identify those.
- 11 DO YOU TEACH SPECIFIC SKILLS, AS FAR AS MECHANICS GO?
- 12 No, I don't prior to the conference. I see the conference as more of a social and content discussion--there has to be a balance of social, content, and mechanics.
- 13 DURING THE EDITING PROCESS, HOW MANY STUDENTS SEE THE PIECE OF WRITING?

- 14 More than one person. I would say probably four to five people before that piece is published. One of those people is probably going to be me.
- 15 WHAT IS YOUR ROLE DURING PEER EDITING?
- 16 Basically, I'm a participant. But not really another peer because they come to the conference in a different frame of reference than with another peer because we've eliminated more of the social aspect of it.
- 17 WILL THEY HAVE ALREADY SEEN ANOTHER STUDENT PRIOR TO COMING TO YOU?
- 18 Most likely they will have.
- 19 DO YOU EVER SUGGEST THEY NEED TO GO BACK AND FIND ANOTHER EDITOR?
- 20 Yes, often. That's what I do a lot. Otherwise it would be overwhelming.
- 21 DO YOU END UP DOING THE FINAL EDITING ON THEIR PAPERS?
- 22 No.
- 23 SO YOU LEAVE THE ERRORS?
- 24 I leave them. But in our conference I'll talk about them. I'll make sure as I read the paper with the student that I identify that as being a weakness. I won't come right out and say, "You need a comma here." The strategy I've found that works the best, say for commas, is to say, "Here, read this to me. Is there anything you think needs to be done?" Most of the time they'll pick it out because they'll naturally pause when they read it.
- 25 SO, JUST FOR CLARIFICATION, ARE YOU SAYING YOU SEE EVERY PIECE OF WRITING BEFORE IT'S PUBLISHED.
- 26 No, I don't. I see the ones I might have concerns about. The stronger students I don't necessarily see everything that they do.
- 27 WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS' REACTIONS TO PEER EDITING?
- 28 Most of the time kids are supportive of each other. They seem to be very direct, too. They don't mince any words. They go right for it. And the kids take it quite well.
- 29 DO THEY USE THE EDITING SYMBOLS?

- 30 No.
- 31 DO THEY WRITE ON ONE ANOTHER'S PAPERS?
- 32 No, the person providing the input during the conference is not to have a pencil. They're not to write on that paper. If there's any revision done at that conference, it's the author who does it. I usually advise against doing it at that time so the conference goes faster. Otherwise they get bogged down.
- 33 I WANTED TO ASK ABOUT HOW LONG IT TAKES?
- 34 To get one piece done? It takes quite a while to really get at both content and mechanics. It takes about three or four times of meeting. They usually work about ten minutes a time because I've found that anything after ten minutes gets to be more social, and they lose productivity.
- 35 DO YOU EVER SEE PROBLEMS WITH KIDS WHO DON'T AGREE WITH MECHANICAL CHANGES SUGGESTED BY PEERS?
- 36 Occasionally I see that.
- 37 DO YOU SEE A CORRELATION BETWEEN A STUDENT'S READING ABILITY AND HIS ABILITY TO DO PEER EDITING?
- 38 Okay, I have two answers to this question. One is, on the content and mechanics I see more of a relationship. Reading ability has an impact, yes. But how they interact with that peer during the conference, then I don't see any relationship. For example, some of the readers that I would consider to have fewer reading skills than others, they sometimes have better social skills, and so they're able to accomplish more during an editing conference and are really more effective because they're better at working with someone else. Those students who are far above average in ability sometimes come to the conference with the attitude like, "I know that this is right, and you're wrong," and that doesn't work as well.
- 39 AS FAR AS ACTUALLY LOCATING ERRORS, CAN THESE WEAKER-SKILLED KIDS DO THAT?
- 40 Uh, mechanical errors they have more difficulty with.
- 41 IS THAT A PROBLEM WITHIN THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP TYPE OF THING, THAT THESE KIDS CAN'T FIND THE MECHANICAL ERRORS?

- 42 Yes, it is. They have difficulty locating their own errors, and often times they pick someone who has similar difficulties to be their editor because they're comfortable with them. And so then they don't always find errors.
- 43 DO YOU SEE TRANSFER OR APPLICATION IN STUDENTS' WRITING BECAUSE OF EDITING THE WRITING OF THEIR PEERS?
- 44 I'd say they're more able to pick them out of someone else's writing than their own. I think they're more aware [pause] of the uses of various kinds of punctuation and grammar, structure.
- 45 AND, IF YOU WOULD SEE AN ERROR THAT'S OCCURRING OVER AND OVER IN A LOT OF PAPERS, AND YOU DID A QUICK MINI LESSON ON, SAY, SOME SPECIFIC SKILL, DO YOU SEE SOME CHANGES?
- 46 I do, but I don't know how long term it is. You see it-- application--for a couple weeks, maybe, but I don't know how long term it is. I'm still not sure about that. I will say, though, that it's more long term and meaningful if it's taught through their writing than from a language arts textbook.
- 47 WHAT ARE SOME ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING PEER EDITING?
- 48 Disadvantages--I don't know. [pause]
- 49 MAYBE THERE AREN'T ANY? MAYBE YOU REALLY DON'T SEE ANY?
- 50 Yeah, I see disadvantages. Disadvantages are that everything they publish isn't up to standard English rules or whatever, but yet, the advantages are that kids are writing more and feeling better about it.
- 51 WHAT ABOUT CONTROL? IS THAT A PROBLEM?
- 52 Yeah, if you're talking about classroom management, you're bringing a different kind of skill to that. You have to count on everybody doing their part, and that's where the preliminary things are so important, getting it started off right.

Appendix H

- 1 I HAVE A COUPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS, AND THEN I'D LIKE TO BRIEFLY SHARE SOME OF MY FINDINGS AND SEE IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS.

YOU SAID THAT PEER EDITING SAVES YOU TIME. CAN YOU ELABORATE ON THAT?

- 2 Well, you don't have students lined up at your desk waiting for help. It saves all of us time--the kids and the teacher.

- 3 ANYTHING ELSE?

- 4 Well, of course, the biggest thing is I'm not sitting up until 10:30-11:00 at night correcting papers. We get our work done during the school day. It's wonderful. And for the kids, it's more productive for them.

- 5 I'VE GOT SOME PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM MY FIRST ROUND OF QUESTIONS THAT I'D LIKE TO SHARE, AND THEN I'D LIKE TO SEE IF YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.

I FOUND OUT THAT MOST TEACHERS LET KIDS SELF-SELECT PARTNERS FOR PEER EDITING.

ALSO, EVERYONE AGREED THAT THE TEACHER-MODELING WAS THE MOST CRUCIAL PART OF PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTION, AND MOST TEACHERS MENTIONED DAILY ORAL LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES AS BEING REALLY HELPFUL.

ANOTHER FINDING WAS THAT MOST OF THE TEACHERS ACTED AS A CIRCULATING HELPER DURING PEER EDITING.

ANOTHER WAS THAT NONE OF THE TEACHERS FELT THAT KIDS HAD NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO PEER EDITING.

TEACHERS AGREED UNANIMOUSLY THAT THERE WAS A DEFINITE CORRELATION BETWEEN A STUDENT'S READING ABILITY AND HIS/HER ABILITY TO EDIT EFFECTIVELY.

TEACHERS FELT MOST UNSURE OR CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSFER--WHETHER STUDENTS ACTUALLY APPLIED WHAT THEY WERE BEING TAUGHT TO DO IN THEIR OWN WRITING.

LAST, TEACHERS FELT PEER EDITING WAS BENEFICIAL FOR ALL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF ABILITY. THE DISADVANTAGES THEY FOUND CONCERNED MOSTLY MANAGEMENT AND TIME.

DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS OR REACTIONS TO THE FINDINGS.

- 6 Well, by time, I guess they mean time during the day to get it all in. Is that right?

- 7 YEAH, I BELIEVE THAT'S WHAT THEY MEANT. NOT THAT IT TAKES TOO MUCH TIME, BUT JUST HAVING ENOUGH TIME SET ASIDE EACH DAY BECAUSE OF ALL THE OTHER CURRICULUM. ONE TEACHER SAID THE KIDS ARE DISAPPOINTED IF THEY CAN'T GET TO IT EVERY DAY.

- 8 I think at the beginning, time would be a problem--when you're getting it organized. And we're responsible for teaching so much now, it is hard to get everything in, like sustained silent reading. But I make the time. It's important.
- 9 ANY OTHER RESULTS YOU'D LIKE TO COMMENT ON?
- 10 Well, no, really none of it really surprises me. It's all what I believe. I've done it for a long time. I'd never go back to the old way.
- 11 SO YOU DON'T TAKE PAPERS HOME ANYMORE?
- 12 Very rarely. Not the kids' writing.

Appendix I

1 I HAVE A COUPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR YOU, AND THEN I'LL SHARE MY FINDINGS AND ASK YOU TO COMMENT.

YOU SAID YOU HAVE AN AIDE IN YOUR ROOM DURING WRITER'S WORKSHOP. HOW MANY STUDENTS DO YOU HAVE?

2 I have 29.

3 I WAS WONDERING HOW YOU THOUGHT THE PEER EDITING WOULD GO IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE AN AIDE?

4 [laughter] Oh, I'd probably be swamped! No, really, it's wonderful to have the extra help. It would be lots more work without her.

5 COULD YOU DO IT ALONE?

6 Well, yes--yes, I could, but it would take longer, and I wouldn't be able to give the kids the extra attention--you know, individual help that I do now. It's an ideal situation.

7 WOULD YOU TRADE A SMALLER CLASS SIZE FOR YOUR AIDE?

8 Definitely, I could handle 20 kids easily.

9 HERE ARE SOME BASIC THINGS I DISCOVERED BY TALKING WITH TEACHERS. I'LL SHARE THEM WITH YOU AND THEN SEE IF YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.

I FOUND OUT THAT MOST TEACHERS LET KIDS SELF-SELECT PARTNERS FOR PEER EDITING.

ALSO, EVERYONE AGREED THAT THE TEACHER-MODELING WAS THE MOST CRUCIAL PART OF PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTION, AND MOST TEACHERS MENTIONED DAILY ORAL LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES AS BEING REALLY HELPFUL.

ANOTHER FINDING WAS THAT MOST OF THE TEACHERS ACTED AS A CIRCULATING HELPER DURING PEER EDITING.

ANOTHER WAS THAT NONE OF THE TEACHERS FELT THAT KIDS HAD NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO PEER EDITING.

TEACHERS AGREED UNANIMOUSLY THAT THERE WAS A DEFINITE CORRELATION BETWEEN A STUDENT'S READING ABILITY AND HIS/HER ABILITY TO EDIT EFFECTIVELY.

TEACHERS FELT MOST UNSURE OR CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSFER--WHETHER STUDENTS ACTUALLY APPLIED WHAT THEY WERE BEING TAUGHT TO DO IN THEIR OWN WRITING.

LAST, TEACHERS FELT PEER EDITING WAS BENEFICIAL FOR ALL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF ABILITY. THE DISADVANTAGES THEY FOUND CONCERNED MOSTLY MANAGEMENT AND TIME.

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER FINDINGS? ANY COMMENTS?

- 10 I'm glad about it. It's good to know I'm doing things similar to other teachers and that we basically agree with each other. I really believe in what I'm doing with the kids. I know it works. I see it every day.

Appendix J

- 1 I HAVE A COUPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR YOU, AND THEN I'LL SHARE MY FINDINGS AND ASK YOU TO COMMENT.
 YOU SAID PEER EDITING TAKES MORE TIME. COULD YOU ELABORATE ON THAT?
- 2 Oh, yeah--well, it does. It really does, but it's worth it.
- 3 WHAT ARE SOME WAYS THAT YOU SEE IT TAKING MORE TIME?
- 4 I'm constantly going all over the room, watching, answering questions, giving short conferences or mini-lessons. I never sit at my desk. And the kids naturally take longer than I would--I could do their whole paper in three minutes--it takes them much longer. I have to be patient--not give them too much help--let them find the errors on their own.
- 5 YEAH, SOMEBODY ELSE SAID ANYTHING WORTHWHILE IS NOT EASY.
- 6 Exactly!
- 7 HERE ARE SOME FINDINGS FROM MY STUDY. I'D LIKE TO SHARE THEM WITH YOU, AND THEN SEE IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS OR REACTIONS.
 I FOUND OUT THAT MOST TEACHERS LET KIDS SELF-SELECT PARTNERS FOR PEER EDITING.
 ALSO, EVERYONE AGREED THAT THE TEACHER-MODELING WAS THE MOST CRUCIAL PART OF PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTION, AND MOST TEACHERS MENTIONED DAILY ORAL LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES AS BEING REALLY HELPFUL.
 ANOTHER FINDING WAS THAT MOST OF THE TEACHERS ACTED AS A CIRCULATING HELPER DURING PEER EDITING.
 ANOTHER WAS THAT NONE OF THE TEACHERS FELT THAT KIDS HAD NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO PEER EDITING.
 TEACHERS AGREED UNANIMOUSLY THAT THERE WAS A DEFINITE CORRELATION BETWEEN A STUDENT'S READING ABILITY AND HIS/HER ABILITY TO EDIT EFFECTIVELY.
 TEACHERS FELT MOST UNSURE OR CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSFER--WHETHER STUDENTS ACTUALLY APPLIED WHAT THEY WERE BEING TAUGHT TO DO IN THEIR OWN WRITING.
 LAST, TEACHERS FELT PEER EDITING WAS BENEFICIAL FOR ALL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF ABILITY. THE DISADVANTAGES THEY FOUND CONCERNED MOSTLY MANAGEMENT AND TIME.
 ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO RESPOND TO?
- 8 The transfer thing bothers me. I always worry about that. It drives me crazy sometimes. Why they can do it if you point it out, or zero in on one sentence, but they don't catch it during their writing, especially in their own writing. They're better at catching it in one of their peer's writing.

- 9 I SUPPOSE IT'S HARDER TO BE OBJECTIVE ABOUT YOUR OWN WRITING. YOU'RE SO CAUGHT UP IN THE THOUGHTS, MAYBE IT'S HARD TO SEPARATE THE MECHANICS? THAT'S WHAT ANOTHER TEACHER MENTIONED, ANYWAY.
- 10 Yes, I'm sure that's a part of it. And like I said, they do get better. By the end of the year, most of them are at least using capitals and periods pretty consistently. I mean, that's really progress from where some of them started!

Appendix K

- 1 I HAVE A COUPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR YOU, AND THEN I'LL SHARE MY FINDINGS AND ASK YOU TO COMMENT.
 YOU MADE THE COMMENT THAT KIDS SEEM TO PICK OUT PARTNERS WHO HAPPEN TO HAVE ABOUT THE SAME ABILITIES AS THEY DO. HOW DOES THAT WORK? HOW CAN TWO LOW-SKILLED KIDS EDIT EFFECTIVELY?

- 2 Well, of course they're not going to find as many of the errors as, say, a good writer or editor. But the thing is, they don't feel threatened or incompetent with a friend who also has difficulty. I think they can help each other and might get more out of it by struggling together--instead of one finding all the mistakes. And too, their writing is usually simpler, not as long or complex as the better writers, so they're not as overwhelmed by this lengthy piece. They're basically looking for capitals, periods, and spelling, and the aide usually fixes up the spelling errors they leave in. And then I might really zero in on, say, quotation marks if they have trouble there. You'd be surprised--you know the old saying, "Two heads are better than one."

- 3 I'VE GOT SOME PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM MY FIRST ROUND OF QUESTIONS THAT I'D LIKE TO SHARE AND THEN I'D LIKE TO SEE IF YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.
 I FOUND OUT THAT MOST TEACHERS LET KIDS SELF-SELECT PARTNERS FOR PEER EDITING.
 ALSO, EVERYONE AGREED THAT THE TEACHER-MODELING WAS THE MOST CRUCIAL PART OF PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTION, AND MOST TEACHERS MENTIONED DAILY ORAL LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES AS BEING REALLY HELPFUL.
 ANOTHER FINDING WAS THAT MOST OF THE TEACHERS ACTED AS A CIRCULATING HELPER DURING PEER EDITING.
 ANOTHER WAS THAT NONE OF THE TEACHERS FELT THAT KIDS HAD NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO PEER EDITING.
 TEACHERS AGREED UNANIMOUSLY THAT THERE WAS A DEFINITE CORRELATION BETWEEN A STUDENT'S READING ABILITY AND HIS/HER ABILITY TO EDIT EFFECTIVELY.
 TEACHERS FELT MOST UNSURE OR CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSFER--WHETHER STUDENTS ACTUALLY APPLIED WHAT THEY WERE BEING TAUGHT TO DO IN THEIR OWN WRITING.
 LAST, TEACHERS FELT PEER EDITING WAS BENEFICIAL FOR ALL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF ABILITY. THE DISADVANTAGES THEY FOUND CONCERNED MOSTLY MANAGEMENT AND TIME.
 DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS OR REACTIONS TO THESE FINDINGS?

- 4 I think when teachers really believe in something, it will work, and that's what your results are saying to me. Everyone seems dedicated. They expect it to work, so it does.

- 5 DID ANYTHING SURPRISE YOU? IS THERE ANYTHING YOU QUESTION?

- 6 No, I think the concerns they had were normal ones. We all worry about accountability. But, like this transfer thing--I had the same concerns years ago when we used a basal to teach grammar and punctuation. You didn't see it then, either. I think, really, you see it more with writer's workshop and the peer editing.
- 7 YEAH, THAT'S WHAT OTHERS SAID, TOO.

Appendix L

- 1 I HAVE A COUPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR YOU, AND THEN I'LL SHARE MY FINDINGS AND ASK YOU TO COMMENT.

DURING YOUR INTERVIEW, YOU HAD SOME CONCERNS ABOUT MANAGEMENT. YOU MENTIONED KIDS SLIPPING THROUGH THE CRACKS. ANYTHING FURTHER YOU WANT TO ADD TO THAT.

- 2 Well, basically, it's just that being a first-year teacher, I want to do a good job, and I'm--I guess, not always sure that I am doing everything I possibly can to make sure the kids are getting what they need for junior high. I know worksheets are bad--kids hate them. I hate them. They turn kids off--but for evaluation, at least you can prove something easier. Yes, this kid does or does not know this skill or the spelling of this word. There's a lot more worry about keeping records, making notes to yourself, trying to keep track of who needs what. With workbooks you would know more. You would have concrete evidence. With just their writing, it's hard to tell. So that's what I'm working on--my organization and the management of it.

- 3 OKAY. I'D LIKE TO SHARE THE RESULTS OF SOME OF MY FINDINGS AND THEN SEE IF YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.

I FOUND OUT THAT MOST TEACHERS LET KIDS SELF-SELECT PARTNERS FOR PEER EDITING.

ALSO, EVERYONE AGREED THAT THE TEACHER-MODELING WAS THE MOST CRUCIAL PART OF PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTION, AND MOST TEACHERS MENTIONED DAILY ORAL LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES AS BEING REALLY HELPFUL.

ANOTHER FINDING WAS THAT MOST OF THE TEACHERS ACTED AS A CIRCULATING HELPER DURING PEER EDITING.

ANOTHER WAS THAT NONE OF THE TEACHERS FELT THAT KIDS HAD NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO PEER EDITING.

TEACHERS AGREED UNANIMOUSLY THAT THERE WAS A DEFINITE CORRELATION BETWEEN A STUDENT'S READING ABILITY AND HIS/HER ABILITY TO EDIT EFFECTIVELY.

TEACHERS FELT MOST UNSURE OR CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSFER--WHETHER STUDENTS ACTUALLY APPLIED WHAT THEY WERE BEING TAUGHT TO DO IN THEIR OWN WRITING.

LAST, TEACHERS FELT PEER EDITING WAS BENEFICIAL FOR ALL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF ABILITY. THE DISADVANTAGES THEY FOUND CONCERNED MOSTLY MANAGEMENT AND TIME.

ANYTHING YOU'D CARE TO RESPOND TO?

- 4 Well, I feel good that we all seem to agree on things. I feel like next year it won't be quite so confusing. I had a small class this year, so that was lucky for me. Now I know what to expect. I already have some ideas of how to modify it, maybe loosen up the structure a little so I'm free to move around more. But I still want that time to enjoy the kid's stories. I think that's important, too, for me and for the kids.

Appendix M

- 1 I HAVE A COUPLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR YOU, AND THEN I'LL SHARE MY FINDINGS AND ASK YOU TO COMMENT.

YOU SAID DURING OUR INTERVIEW THAT YOU DON'T DO THE FINAL EDITING ON STUDENTS' PAPERS. YOU SAID YOU LEAVE ERRORS. THEN YOU SAID LATER THAT ONE OF THE DISADVANTAGES IS THAT YOU DON'T GET A FINISHED PRODUCT. WOULD YOU EXPLAIN THIS?

- 2 Well, I believe that a part of the writer's workshop philosophy is that this is the kids' writing. It's not mine, and it's not their peers. I'll give them suggestions or pointers, but in the final analysis, it's their writing and their responsibility to make the changes. If they choose not to, then that's their decision.

- 3 WHAT IF IT'S NOT THAT THEY DON'T CHOOSE TO, BUT THAT THEY CAN'T?

- 4 Oh, but they can. They have 25 other students and myself to get all the help they need. Even low-ability kids need to develop independence, not get the message that someone else will fix up all their mistakes. They're not left helpless. There are always people available to help them. That's why I don't correct everyone's final copy. If this is the very best they can do and they're satisfied with it, then it goes to publication. In the long run, it develops their independence and they learn from their mistakes. It's not so much that it saves me time. It's that I refuse to do their work for them, to be a crutch all the time. They won't have that next year.

- 5 THAT'S A VERY CONVINCING ARGUMENT. I THINK YOU MAY BE RIGHT.

OKAY. I'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF THE FINDINGS FROM MY STUDY AND SEE IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING ADDITIONAL TO ADD.

I FOUND OUT THAT MOST TEACHERS LET KIDS SELF-SELECT PARTNERS FOR PEER EDITING.

ALSO, EVERYONE AGREED THAT THE TEACHER-MODELING WAS THE MOST CRUCIAL PART OF PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTION, AND MOST TEACHERS MENTIONED DAILY ORAL LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES AS BEING REALLY HELPFUL.

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TEACHERS FELT MOST UNSURE OR CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSFER-- WHETHER STUDENTS ACTUALLY APPLIED WHAT THEY WERE BEING TAUGHT TO DO IN THEIR OWN WRITING.

LAST, TEACHERS FELT PEER EDITING WAS BENEFICIAL FOR ALL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF ABILITY. THE DISADVANTAGES THEY FOUND CONCERNED MOSTLY MANAGEMENT AND TIME.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO COMMENT ON? ANY SURPRISES?

- 6 No, not really. I helped organize the writer's workshop in this building, and it's encouraging to hear all the positive feedback. It's all been worthwhile. And you know, I've had some real positive feedback from the Holmes [Junior High] English teachers. They say they can see the positive results of writer's workshop and peer editing when the kids come over there. They've noticed it. That's probably the most encouraging news of all.