

Feedback in Second Language Writing

Now in its second edition, this volume provides an up-to-date, accessible, yet authoritative introduction to feedback on second-language writing for upper-undergraduate and postgraduate students, teachers, and researchers in TESOL, applied linguistics, composition studies, and EAP. Chapters written by leading experts emphasize the potential that feedback has for helping to create a supportive teaching environment, for conveying and modeling ideas about good writing, for developing the ways students talk about writing, and for mediating the relationship between students' wider cultural and social worlds and their growing familiarity with new literacy practices. In addition to updated chapters from the first edition, this edition includes new chapters that focus on new and developing areas of feedback research including student engagement and participation with feedback, the links between second language acquisition and feedback research, automated computer feedback, and the use by students of internet resources and social media as feedback resources.

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Feedback in Second Language Writing

Contexts and Issues

Second Edition

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Author's Preface

The first edition of this volume, published in 2006, filled an important gap in the literature on feedback, the provision of which has come to be recognized as one of the ESL writing teacher's most important tasks. This second edition is a response to the considerable changes that have occurred in feedback research since then. So, while retaining updated versions of some of the chapters from the first edition, it includes ten new chapters as well as a new section on student engagement with feedback. In this edition, readers will find chapters that consider the links between written corrective feedback and second language acquisition, chapters that focus on the collaborative and interactive aspects of feedback, and chapters that consider how teachers and learners can best harness the potential of technology in the provision and facilitation of feedback. As in the first edition, the chapters emphasize the potential feedback has for helping to create a supportive teaching environment, for conveying and modeling ideas about good writing, for developing the ways students talk about writing, and for mediating the relationship between students' wider cultural and social worlds and their growing familiarity with new literacy practices.

Despite the major part feedback plays in modern writing classrooms and in the lives of all teachers and learners, we still believe that much of the research published in journals fails to find its way to teachers. We have asked contributors of the volume to try to address these gaps by providing readers with a clear synthesis of theory and practice, highlighting what is conceptually and pedagogically significant, and offering a state-of-the-art picture of the key issues in feedback today. We therefore attempt to bring together theoretical understanding and practical applications of feedback for teachers, researchers, and others working in the fields of second-language teaching and literacy studies.

We do this by focusing on what we see as the four key dimensions of feedback. The first situates feedback in the wider institutional, social, political and cultural context and considers factors that participants bring to the writing class that have been found to influence feedback. The second looks more closely at the "how" and "so what" of feedback: the ways it is shaped through its modes of delivery and its potential impact on learning and writing. The third is concerned with the negotiation of feedback in the relationships between providers and

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receivers, addressing issues that arise in the social interactions around feedback itself. The fourth reflects recent moves in feedback research toward greater interest in how students understand feedback and the ways they engage with it. These different dimensions are not meant to imply divisions between context, delivery, interaction, and engagement, as it is evident that every act of feedback will involve a complex interaction among them. They do, however, allow the authors to focus on one or other feature of the process to highlight salient aspects of feedback and what it means for participants.

Another important feature of the book is that it takes a broad view of feedback on writing. In the following chapters, distinguished figures in the field of second-language writing: explore different modes, such as oral, written, computer-modeled, and electronically mediated feedback; examine commentary given on form, organization, academic conventions, and meaning; review the immediate and longer-term impact of feedback on learning and writing; study the preferences students have for different kinds of interaction and commentary; and discover the kinds of comments that are given and the issues that teachers consider when framing them. Yet, despite the enormous growth of feedback research in research years and the increasing diversity of its focus, many unanswered questions remain. Our aim here is to show that there is a vast array of *potential* questions that are there to be explored.

Finally, we have tried to make the volume as useful to teachers and researchers as possible. Rather than dwell on the abstract benefits of various feedback practices, the authors in this book take care to link research with practice, highlighting what the research tells us about feedback and exploring its relevance for the classroom. The volume goes a long way toward answering questions that researchers and teachers have been asking for some time. These questions include: “What shall I give feedback on?,” “How shall I express it?,” “What mode should I use?,” “How will this affect my relationship to this student?,” and “Will this make a difference to students’ writing?” Thus, each chapter gives teachers and researchers a clear, complete, and current perspective on different issues on which to base their classroom practice or research into this fascinating and fundamental area.

Series Editors' Preface

Second-language students receive feedback on their written language whenever someone makes a comment expressing a judgement of the text. The source of the feedback can be a teacher, other students, or software programmed to automatically analyze or evaluate electronic texts. Constructive feedback intended to raise writers' awareness of their language, improve their texts, and help them to learn to use the language effectively has remained a core component of the second-language writing classroom for many years. From a cognitive perspective, one might expect that the types and timing of effective feedback would have been identified long ago through laboratory studies. However, such research seems to have little to offer to the field's understanding of the dynamics of feedback associated with language classrooms. To learn about the dynamics of feedback, Ken Hyland and Fiona Hyland have compiled a revealing collection of studies investigating a range of feedback practices in instructional contexts. The studies share the definition of feedback as a constructive judgement of text that reflects concern for students' future writing and development of their writing processes. In this sense, all feedback shares a functional purpose. Instances of feedback differ in many other ways including the ways in which writers respond to them.

The editors help readers to discover these differences with a collection of studies examining actual feedback practices. The authors have investigated questions about the effects of a variety of feedback from teachers, peers, and computers, provided in a range of learning contexts, and targeting various different aspects of writing. Insights emerge through analysis of the feedback in view of the sociocultural contexts for learning, the delivery mode for the feedback, the interactions between the learner and the source of the feedback, and the learners' response to the feedback. Each of these perspectives on feedback is carefully observed and richly interpreted through appropriate theoretical lenses. The resulting studies bring readers up-to-date on the complex issue of feedback in second-language learning as it occurs across the many different contexts where learning takes place today. We are very pleased to have this second edition of *Feedback in Second-Language Writing: Contexts and Issues* in the Cambridge Applied Linguistics Series.

