



# **Responding to Student Writing: Giving Feedback and Evaluation While Managing the Paper Load**

**Dr. Lisha Daniels Storey  
Scarborough Center for Writing  
March 29, 2018**

# Goals for today

- Identify key elements of effective response
- Articulate & evaluate guiding principles for response
- Build a repertoire of response strategies



Sample # 1: The Minimalist

Distance, Request Type, and Compliance with a Stranger at the Door

Research by Glick, DeMorest, & Hotze suggest that interpersonal distance can mediate compliance with a small request. In the case of an outgroup solicitor assuming a greater than usual distance tends to reduce nervousness and increase compliance. Pancer, et al. (1979) demonstrated that appeals for charitable donations, especially personal appeals, elicit active avoidance in passersby. Presumably people assumed a greater distance from the donation site to reduce the anxiety that such an appeal produces.

Argyle & Dean (1965) have proposed that in social interactions an interpersonal distance equilibrium is established. This results in anxiety, reduction of eye contact, and attempts to compensate and reestablish the equilibrium. In the case of a request from a stranger, the easiest way to reduce this anxiety is to terminate the interaction by refusing to comply. . . .

Sample #2: The Friendly, Interested Reader

Distance, Request Type, and Compliance with a Stranger at the Door

Research by Glick, DeMorest, & Hotze suggest that interpersonal distance can mediate compliance with a small request. In the case of an outgroup solicitor assuming a greater than usual distance tends to reduce nervousness and increase compliance. Pancer, et al. (1979) demonstrated that appeals for charitable donations, especially personal appeals, elicit active avoidance in passersby. Presumably people assumed a greater distance from the donation site to reduce the anxiety that such an appeal produces.

Argyle & Dean (1965) have proposed that in social interactions an interpersonal distance equilibrium is established. This results in anxiety, reduction of eye contact, and attempts to compensate and reestablish the equilibrium. In the case of a request from a stranger, the easiest way to reduce this anxiety is to terminate the interaction by refusing to comply. . . .

A very interesting combination of concepts to study and a promising start to this lit. review. As you revise, these questions may help.

Are you introducing all the key concepts and research in...

How can you link more explicitly with previous CA?

How do these two studies - esp. the concepts under study - connect?

What, specifically, does this mean?

Sample #3: The Aggressive, Detailed Reader

Distance, Request Type, and Compliance with a Stranger at the Door

Research by Glick, DeMorest, & Hotze suggest that interpersonal distance can mediate compliance with a small request. In the case of an outgroup solicitor assuming a greater than usual distance tends to reduce nervousness and increase compliance. Pancer, et al. (1979) demonstrated that appeals for charitable donations, especially personal appeals, elicit active avoidance in passersby. Presumably people assumed a greater distance from the donation site to reduce the anxiety that such an appeal produces.

Argyle & Dean (1965) have proposed that in social interactions an interpersonal distance equilibrium is established. This results in anxiety, reduction of eye contact, and attempts to compensate and reestablish the equilibrium. In the case of a request from a stranger, the easiest way to reduce this anxiety is to terminate the interaction by refusing to comply. . . .

S-V agr  
year 3  
Follow APA!  
carefully  
use psychological terms!  
Not quite right - Reread Pancer's study.  
other studies on compliance?  
What??  
Be specific.

link these  
clarify, elaborate!  
link of previous pt  
out of date!  
More recent studies?

Sample #4: The Big-Picture Respondent

A very interesting combination of concepts to study and a promising start to this lit. review. You've got most of the major studies, but what about

Distance, Request Type, and Compliance with a Stranger at the Door

Research by Glick, DeMorest, & Hotze suggest that interpersonal distance can mediate compliance with a small request. In the case of an outgroup solicitor assuming a greater than usual distance tends to reduce nervousness and increase compliance. Pancer, et al. (1979) demonstrated that appeals for charitable donations, especially personal appeals, elicit active avoidance in passersby. Presumably people assumed a greater distance from the donation site to reduce the anxiety that such an appeal produces.

Argyle & Dean (1965) have proposed that in social interactions an interpersonal distance equilibrium is established. This results in anxiety, reduction of eye contact, and attempts to compensate and reestablish the equilibrium. In the case of a request from a stranger, the easiest way to reduce this anxiety is to terminate the interaction by refusing to comply. . . .

Rodriguez (2002)?  
And as you revise, work to create a stronger logical sequence.

Sample #5: The Copy Editor

Distance, Request Type, and Compliance with a Stranger at the Door

Research by Glick, DeMorest, <sup>and (1988) S</sup> Hotze suggest that interpersonal distance can mediate compliance with a small request. In the case of an outgroup solicitor assuming a greater than usual distance tends to reduce nervousness and increase compliance.

Pancer, et al. (1979) demonstrated that appeals for charitable donations, especially personal appeals, elicit active avoidance in passersby. Presumably people assumed a greater distance from the donation site to reduce the anxiety that such an appeal produces.

Argyle & Dean (1965) have proposed that in social interactions an interpersonal distance equilibrium is established. This results in anxiety, reduction of eye contact, and attempts to compensate and reestablish the equilibrium. In the case of a request from a stranger, the easiest way to reduce this anxiety is to terminate the interaction by refusing to comply....

*disruption*  
anxiety  
When distance is reduced, the equilibrium is disturbed.

Sample #6: The Maximalist (and Sleep-Deprived) Respondent

Distance, Request Type, and Compliance with a Stranger at the Door

Research by Glick, DeMorest, <sup>and (1988) S</sup> Hotze suggest that interpersonal distance can mediate compliance with a small request. In the case of an outgroup solicitor assuming a greater than usual distance tends to reduce nervousness and increase compliance.

Pancer, et al. (1979) demonstrated that appeals for charitable donations, especially personal appeals, elicit active avoidance in passersby. Presumably people assumed a greater distance from the donation site to reduce the anxiety that such an appeal produces.

Argyle & Dean (1965) have proposed that in social interactions an interpersonal distance equilibrium is established. This results in anxiety, reduction of eye contact, and attempts to compensate and reestablish the equilibrium. In the case of a request from a stranger, the easiest way to reduce this anxiety is to terminate the interaction by refusing to comply....

*You do an effective job of introducing the key concepts under study. But you're missing an important study that relates to distance (Rodriguez, 2007). As you revise, be sure to forge stronger logical connections among these concepts. You can do that by adding logical transitions and also by considering - and emphasizing for readers - how these concepts are related. And be sure that you're leading up to identifying a gap in or problem with existing knowledge about distance, request type, and compliance - i.e., justify the need for your study.*

*add Rodriguez (2007)*  
*anxiety is the proper psychological term*  
*disruption*  
*When distance is reduced, the equilibrium is disturbed, [add this kind of clarification]*

# What is response?

Responding to writing is a communication skill:

- Conveys information about discipline-specific practices and content
- Connects those ideas to past and future writing and thinking

Feedback as “part of **dynamic two-way conversation** between the teacher and the student”

Dana Ferris, *Response to Student Writing*, 2003

---

# What is response?

“Feedback is rooted in the partnership between student and teacher. . . . When students respond to feedback as an **invitation to contribute** something of their own to an **academic conversation**, they do so because students imagine their instructors as readers waiting to learn from their contributions, not readers waiting to report what they’ve done wrong on a given paper.”

Nancy Sommers, *Across the Drafts*, 2006

---

# What is response?

Longitudinal study (1997-2001) of 400 students:

“What emerged in every conversation with students about their college writing is the power of comments, their presence to absence, to shape writing. When students were asked each year to describe their best writing experiences, two overriding characteristics emerged: (1) **the opportunity to write about something that matters to the student** and (2) **the opportunity to engage with an instructor through written comments**”

Nancy Sommers, *Responding to Student Writers*, 2013

---

# Response Strategies

## **Global writing concerns (GLOCs)**

Conceptual and structural-level planning and revision:

- Ideas or content, focus, genre, argument, thesis, development, organization, clarity of purpose, awareness of audience, understanding of task

## **Local writing concerns (LOCs)**

Sentence-level revision:

- Conventions, punctuation, citation, style, proofreading, typos, word choice

## Response strategies

This analysis assignment for a lower division communication course asks students to write a **one-page summary and analysis** of an article about nonverbal communication.

This is a **next-to-final draft** completed out of class. Students have **one more revision** opportunity before submitting their final analyses.

Give written feedback to help this writer revise.

---

# Response strategies

Discuss with a partner: What did you do and why?

- What does your feedback communicate to the writer?
  - What next steps could the writer take after reading your feedback?
-

# Response strategies

Consider three different modes:

1. Editorial
  2. Directive
  3. Facilitative
-

# Directive feedback

Clearly tells or coaches a writer what to do or not to do.

“Avoid repeating your introduction in your conclusion. Close the discussion with your insights.”

“Use a semicolon between two sentences. This is a comma splice.”

“Provide an example to make your point clear. This takes out the guess work.”

---

# Facilitative feedback

Asks students to engage with their work critically (e.g. revise argument, consider audience, or offer another perspective).

“According to Foucault, what is the relationship between seeing and power? Show you understand the theory.”

“Did you consider looking at the issue from the parents’ perspective to present a stronger counter-argument?”

“Do all teenagers use Snapchat or is this an assumption? This claim requires research and support.”

---

# Response strategies

Use different strategies appropriate to the student, situation, assignment.

- Directive statements can be vague; questions can be...questionable.
- Use questions to give direction or information
- Use direct statements can provide explicit instructions or information, but be aware of appropriation

Communication analysis feedback: what response strategies did you use? How might you employ facilitative or directive feedback differently to communicate with the writer?

# Addressing LOCs

## Prioritize

- Identify patterns (grammatical as well as rhetorical)
- Identify which LOCs most impact meaning
- Identify which LOCs are “treatable”

## Avoid copy editing (and save time)

- Direct students to handbooks (or “minimal marking”)
  - Correct—and explain—a sample paragraph
  - Respond to the *writer*, not the *writing*
-

# Analyze and evaluate your feedback

- What values are communicated by my response? Do comments reflect my sense of the student's needs, assignment grading criteria, and the course goals? Are they specific or general?
- What is the balance between marginal and end comments? How do they work together?
- What is the balance between positive and critical comments?
- Are my comments clear and specific? Are my questions helpful? Will the answers to these questions potentially improve the paper?
- *Post-assignment or post-semester:* How did students revise? How were comments interpreted?

... and ask students ...

# Response best practices

- Discover and emphasize the global concerns.
    - Tie this feedback to the central task of the assignment.
  - Give a sense of how much and which work needs to be done in a revision.
  - Signal which local concerns need work.
  - Encourage the writer to do the hard work of revising.
  - Hold students accountable for considering feedback, and using it (or explaining why not).
  - Don't forget to praise, and do it strategically.
-

# Time-saving strategies

- If assignment is really in trouble, meet in person rather than respond in writing.
  - See a common problem across many papers? Teach or address in class. (Read several papers first to get a sense of the stack.)
  - Not necessary to respond with written comments to every kind of assignment, or to each stage of an assignment.
    - *Peer response, self-assessment, in-class comments*
  - Not necessary to respond to every problem on every student draft.
  - Set time boundaries for yourself and for each paper.
-

## Take away points

- Although feedback is difficult and time-consuming, it's some of the most important teaching we do.
    - Learning how to write: how to receive and interpret feedback
  - Create commenting priorities for yourself and for your students, trying to address the global before the local.
  - Consider feedback as a conversation between two thinking people.
-

# Questions

- What is your approach to response? How has it changed?
- What do you find challenging about responding to student writing?
- How do you manage the paper load?
- What kinds of response have your students found useful? What's generated effective revision?
- How do you balance directive and facilitative feedback? How do you avoid appropriation?