Transformative Pedagogy in Conversation:

The Role of Instructor Interventions in Peer Feedback for Speech Outline Development

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Michael J. Stasio

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Abstract

This study investigated the efficacy of written and oral peer feedback used as an instructional strategy to support student learning in speech outline development. One hundred seven students from a California Community College participated in a mixed-methods evaluative quasi-experimental study conducted in a two-fold process with both quantitative and qualitative measures. Existing literature on peer-centered learning has various gaps. These include four areas of uncertainty: implementation interventions, trust, self-perceived benefits, and contexts. Overall perceived learning benefits and four specific instructor intervention variables were measured in this study: (1) creation of a safe space for collaboration, (2) student training on the characteristics of effective feedback, (3) student observations of instructor modeling of effective feedback, and (4) student training to engage in a carefully designed peer feedback active learning process. The results indicated that peer-centered learning facilitated by instructor interventions had a significant positive effect on cognitive learning, group interaction, innovation, outline development and speech performance. Future research may address the transferability of this model to other contexts, and the self-perceived benefits compared to actual performance for English as a Second Language (ESL) students despite their preference for instructor feedback.
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“To teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge.” ~ Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of Freedom

1. Introduction

Nationwide at many levels of education, teachers are asked to conduct classroom assessment research to assess learning and inform their teaching, and De Anza Community College in Cupertino is currently tasked by the State of California to develop assessment tools to measure Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). The concept of outcome-based learning is high on today’s education agenda—shifting the focus from objectives to outcomes. Whereas objectives tend to focus on knowledge and skills, outcomes describe broader aspects of behavior that incorporate a wide range of knowledge and skills (Lee-Wheat, 2009). How tools are formulated, assessed, and reflected upon by faculty to measure SLOs may affect accreditation, state funding for the college, and of critical interest in this study, how students learn and construct knowledge. Once teaching and learning are measurable in the classroom and there is time to reflect on instructional interventions, results can lead to purposeful action, in effect closing the learning cycle for teachers and students. Kolb (1984) describes the learning cycle as complex dialectic feedback processes that clarify “how learning transforms the impulses, feelings, and desires of concrete experience into higher-order purposeful action” (p. 22). Instructors may incorporate valid and authentic assessment tools into a reflective process to stimulate intra and interdepartmental collegial dialogue about student success stories that inform transformative pedagogy. To foreground this study, I became interested in experiential teaching practices during
spring quarter 2009, when I worked as a graduate teaching assistant in an organizational communication course at De Anza Community College. For several collaborative lessons we utilized active learning tools such as peer feedback, a form of conversational learning in small groups. I was curious to know more about the learning impact of written and oral peer feedback.

1.1. Researcher’s Ontological Approach to Peer Feedback in Conversation

One key feature of peer-centered learning is the conversational context. Through focused conversation, people engaged in peer feedback “are making something in common, i.e., creating something new together” (Bohm, quoted in Stewart, Zediker, & Black, 2004, p. 35). Dialogue is similar to and used interchangeably with conversation by many researchers (Baker, Patricia, Jensen, and Kolb, 2005). However I agree with the distinction between dialogue and conversation made by Baker et al. (2005),

…the root of dialogue is more related to opposing voices in search of truth, a definition that emphasizes conflict and a more rhetorical approach than conversation…. The term conversation, in contrast is used by more ontologically oriented writers…who focus on human understanding and human experience [in relationships] rather than on abstract knowledge about ideas. (p. 414)

A reciprocal dialogic third place is Buber’s invitational between space where participants with two or more divergent views have the opportunity to cocreate new knowledge and/or outcome(s) (Arnett, 2004; Pauly, 2009). Instead of seeing through a lens that views contrary ideas as having tension between them to be jointly resolved in respectful dialogue, I view inclusive conversation in the classroom as a way to coconstruct meaning that continues to evolve with multiple perspectives without explicit tension. Any perceived tension for a learner may emerge internally instead of between people, but a variety of perspectives give each learner the opportunity to grow
over time. Each perspective has value and may contribute to the whole conversation, and individual learners modify knowledge at their own rate. In conversational learning the perceived world and life script naturally evolve at various speeds based on a person’s prior knowledge. We are always between where we were and where we are going, but no individual learner’s present point is exactly the same as another’s. The only constant in learning is layers of iterative change as our conversations construct the current state, “an in-between reality” (Voegelin, quoted in Stewart et al., 2004, p. 27) of multiple perceptions. For purposes of this paper, I use the term conversation instead of dialogue because I believe conversation more fully describes the relational—ontological—aspects of social learning experiences in a higher education classroom environment. The researcher’s aim in conversational learning during peer feedback is to improve the writing/speech product, not to create a between space for contentious issues such as race, religion, gender, class, power, age, environment, and geopolitics.

1.2. Background and Goal of the Study

Today educators are not only expected to keep abreast of their own areas of scholarship, but must also keep current with teaching practices and innovations that promote good teaching and learning (Nilson, 2003, preface). Specifically in the area of instructional communication, in her essay Why teaching works: The transformative power of pedagogical communication, Jo Sprague (1993) poses three questions that communication educators must ask: “When does teaching work? What is the essence of pedagogical communication? What sort of relationship is the teacher-student relationship?” (p. 351). I contend it is through classroom assessment measures that educators know when teaching works; students and the instructor in conversation are at the heart of how they construct knowledge; and it is essential for instructors to provide a safe space and interventions in context for this process to happen. The goal of the study was to
help address these teaching and learning concerns in an operational context. I coordinated with faculty in the Speech Communication Department at De Anza Community College to design assessment tools to measure written and oral peer feedback processes for outline development in public speaking, one of the basic skills transfer core courses. Through discussions with faculty, and reviewing the Public Speaking learning outcomes, the official course outline, course syllabus, and the progression of assignments, I discovered it is the capstone persuasive speech assignment that most directly represents praxis through a culmination of student knowledge, synthesis, evaluation, integration, application and reflection. The assignment progresses through a carefully sequenced set of sub-skills that build to praxis—from enabling knowledge through reading materials, lecture discussion, and peer discussion to application of persuasive strategies and models in the form of persuasive speech outline and presentation.

1.3. Importance of the Study

Based on the official course description, all students in a public speaking class are required to develop speech outlines. Therefore, all department faculty use outline preparation for the capstone persuasive speech. For this mixed-methods evaluation research study (Hoyle, Harris, & Judd, 2002), I coordinated with a public speaking instructor who used written and oral peer feedback as an instructional strategy to support student learning in speech outline development. Outline development is integral to the following SLOs created by Speech Communication Department faculty and agreed to by consensus: (1) develop original, organized, informative and persuasive presentations that are personalized to the audience, developed with an effective plan and purpose, and supported with quality sources that are accurately documented during the speech and in speech outlines; (2) display increasing confidence in speaking extemporaneously; and (3) collaborate with peers to reflect on the effectiveness of presentations, and to provide
positive, growth-producing feedback (D. G. Stasio, personal communication, November 5, 2009).

Keeping in mind the goal of formative assessment—that is to inform good teaching and learning while the class is still in progress—and specifically the goal of this study to assess the efficacy of peer feedback (a form of conversational learning in small groups), the next chapter will discuss literature directly relevant to this thesis. The literature review is organized into eight sections specifically focused on teaching and learning in peer feedback processes: (1) good teaching in small group communication, (2) a discussion-based classroom that includes at-risk marginalized students, (3) delimitations and what is unknown, (4) adult learners in collaboration: an epistemological power perspective, (5) peer feedback efficacy and quality assurance measures, (6) design variables for outline draft development, (7) purpose and significance of the research study, and (8) operational hypothesis. Chapter three addresses research method. Chapter four covers the study with results and discussion. Finally, chapter five presents summaries and conclusions. Special terms and concepts with various meanings are defined in context throughout the paper.
2. Literature Review

2.1. Good Teaching in Small Group Communication

Parker Palmer contributes significant insights to the literature on good teaching in higher education. In his essay Good teaching: A matter of living the mystery, Palmer (1994) writes:

Good teaching, whatever its form, will help...people learn to speak and listen in the community of truth, to understand that truth is not in the conclusions so much as in the process of conversation itself, that if we want to be “in truth,” [we] must be in the conversation…. The knowledge we deal with in the classroom has not only content, but also a characteristic way of imaging the transaction between the knower and the known. In the present “canonical” debate over what knowledge we should teach, more debate over how to gain knowledge would help if good teaching is our aim. (p.328)

The goal of good teaching is to draw students into the process—into the conversation (Angelo, 2007; Angelo & Cross, 1993; Freire, 2007; Postman, 1999); in other words, to cocreate knowledge in a bottom-up student-centered approach (Pearce & Pearce, 2001) where “emphasis is on student responsibility for and commitment to his or her own learning” (Luotto & Stoll, 1992, p. vii). It is through shared communication of genuine ideas that knowledge is cocreated, and I believe this concept is the essence of communication education. This is one of the principle goals of communication applied to education. “Ideas come into being through social construction; there is no ‘truth’ to be apprehended until the truth takes form in language and is processed interpersonally” (Sprague, 1999, p. 20). From a human systems perspective “in the adult meaning making process” (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2005, p. 419), “what learners ‘know’ influences what they ‘experience’ and conversely what they ‘experience’ influences what they ‘know’” (Sheckley, Allen, & Keeton, 1993, pp. 60-1). John Dewey (1916) explains experiential
learning as, “society exists through a process of transmission quite as much as biological life” (p. 3). Communication scholar Lawrence Frey (1999) articulates Dewey’s interdisciplinary pragmatism similarly: “principles from biology to the study of human systems [in] a small group is viewed as a set of interrelated parts that form a unified social system…within an input-throughput-output model” (p. 102). Individuals come into a learning situation with pre-existing values, beliefs, attitudes and cognitive maps, and the physical setting, instructor interventions and social environment affect their group performance and growth. Human cognitive maps are complex hierarchical neural processes of spatially structured areas in the brain maintained by the hippocampus for information storage and retrieval—a visual memory script and recovery function for symbol-object-place associations (O’Donnell, Dansereau, & Hall, 2002; Sato & Yamaguchi, 2009; Tolman, 1948). These are many of the input variables. How the group functions, interacts and makes meaning are throughput variables, and what the group finally produces or decides to do are output variables (Frey, 1999). Thus participants in small group conversation to develop skills are limited by unconscious—implicit—pre-existing assumptions, social values, and cognitive maps, however the tacit knowledge of each individual is authentic and the foundation to build upon (Schilhab, 2007). Core presumptions are made explicit in the naming process—in conversation—through active listening, response and reflection (Baker et al., 2005; Sheckley & Bell, 2006). To formulate new knowledge and change behavior through human experience “requires getting outside of it, seeing it as another would see it, considering what points of contact it has with the life of another so that it may be got into such form that [s/he] can appreciate its meaning” (Dewey, 1916, p. 5).

One such instructor facilitated student-centered learning experience is through the use of collaborative peer feedback with three to four peer editors per group. “A central concern in
teaching small group communication is the need for some coherent framework that helps organize the material” (Frey, 1999, p. 102). Students can utilize a “developmental perspective” (Frey, 1999, p. 103) in praxis with written feedback on draft outlines that is orally explained and discussed in a constructive active listening environment guided by instructor interventions. “Participants discover solutions and create knowledge together” (Zhang Lundeberg, Koehler, & Eberhardt, 2008, p. 4). Engaging the debate over how to gain knowledge, this study looked specifically at instructor intervention variables in small group peer feedback processes as formative assessment to support learning and improve ongoing instruction (Popham, 2008).

Formative assessment is typically student-centered where instructional adjustments are made in reference to what students currently know and can do (Popham, 2008; Topping, 2005). Dewey (1916), Freire (2007), Palmer (1994, 2007), Cross (1981, 1990), Briggs-Myers (1980), Postman & Weingartner (1969), and Luotto & Stoll (1992) have led the way in transforming our view of students from the rational objectivist strategy of keeping students outside the subject as observers and manipulators, to a “microcosm” (Palmer, 1994, p. 329) approach, which empowers them inside the subject as participants and cocreators of knowledge through both written and oral communication. The current educational literature reveals this paradigm shift; that “collaborative knowledge construction” (Zhang et al., 2008, p. 4) in the classroom can have an especially profound impact on what happens—provoking a higher level of cognition, including logic, inquiry, inference, and diagnostic problem-solving (Dallimore, Hertenstein, & Platt, 2008; Gielen, Peeters, Dochy, Onghena, & Struyven, in press; McLuckie & Topping, 2004; Topping, 2005; van den Berg, Admiraal, & Pilot, 2006; van Gennip, Segars, & Tillema, 2009, in press).
Directed engagement and peer feedback give students the opportunity to develop metacognitive skills (thinking about their own and peer’s thinking and learning) (McLuckie & Topping, 2004; Topping, 2005). Peer feedback (also referred to in the literature as peer learning, peer cooperative learning, peer assessment, peer review, and peer revision) is an interpersonal process among status equals in which feedback is given to and received from others aimed at enhancing performance and knowledge through peer-centered interaction (McLuckie & Topping, 2004; Topping, 2005; van Gennip, 2009; McGroarty & Zhu, 1997). Conversely, peer feedback may lack substance when students avoid being critical for fear of offending, and unsubstantive praise may accomplish little more than “illusory learning” (A. Kuskis, personal communication, February 4, 2010). The current literature supports Dr. Alexander Kuskis’ critique of peer feedback and also supports his idea that “learners have to be instructed in how to provide peer feedback of substance” (personal communication, February 4, 2010). Kuskis’ targeted critique is a central underlying concern in extant literature on instructional facilitation of peer-centered learning designs. The study’s operational hypothesis was designed to measure the efficacy of a specific instructor’s peer feedback method, in part, on concerns of nonsubstantive advice and illusory learning.

2.2. A Discussion-Based Classroom that Includes Marginalized Students

Besides engaging students in critical reflection, another challenge in peer-centered learning is drawing students who experience apprehension or prefer to sit silently on the sidelines into the conversation (Palmer, 1994; Stoll, Luotto, & Tedford, 2009). By understanding student learning styles and personality types, teachers and students can cocreate a safe space where potentially silent students may verbalize their thoughts (Briggs-Myers & Myers, 1980; Palmer, 1994). One possible way suggested many years ago by Isabel Briggs-Myers and Myers (1980) (based on Dr.
Mary Budd Rowe’s Department of Childhood Education study at the University of Florida is to slow down, to decrease the demand for speed. Briggs-Myers and Myers (1980) and Isabel’s mother, Katharine Cook Briggs, expanded on concepts published by Carl Gustav Jung in *Psychological Types* to develop the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator personality inventory (MBTI). Later, large-scale studies confirmed the need for instructors to allow for three or more seconds of silence when querying students (Briggs-Myers & Myers, 1980). Allowing more time acknowledges personality types, like the sensing-intuition (S-N) dimension. Sensing people tend to be at a different level of conceptual development and prefer to process information through their five senses with a focus on the facts and details, while intuitive people tend to conceptualize at a creative/imaginative level and are comfortable thinking in complex iterative processes (Brown & DeCoster, 1991; Salter, Evans, & Forney, 2006). Sensing students are just as intelligent as intuitive types, however they need more time to process information and share their ideas (Briggs-Myers & Myers, 1980). Incorporating the MBTI to measure the relationship between communication and/or receiver apprehension and learning development in peer feedback is beyond the scope of this study. But, MBTI literature and discussions shed light on the importance of pedagogy and communication context, that emphasize instructor interventions to reduce fear by creating a safe learning environment conducive to cognitive and affective growth for diverse groups of students (Brown & DeCoster, 1991; Carskadon, 2003; Opt & Loffredo, 2006; Salter et al., 2006).

Communication educators and collaborative practitioners Dr. Edwina L. Stoll et al. (2009) say good communication that leads to high synergy in discussion, such as in peer feedback groups, requires necessary skills and enough confidence to put these skills into practice. “Teaching works when students take risks” (Sprague, 1993, p. 354). But rather than take a risk,
many students are apprehensive and tend to fall into passive or aggressive behavior. Fear is a major stumbling block that inhibits students from using synergistic behaviors in discussion work (Stoll et al., 2009). Discussion skills that draw students into the conversation include (1) listening actively/reflectively, (2) expressing ideas clearly and concretely—clear sending, (3) encouraging participation, and (4) helping move the group to a conclusion (Stoll et al., 2009). Critical components of the first skill, active/reflective listening, are to listen acutely without judgment by not thinking about what you might say next until the current person is done speaking, and to allow enough silence between participant ideas. “If there isn’t sufficient ‘space’ between one speaker and the next, people who need more time may well be silent for much—perhaps all—of the discussion” (Stoll et al., 2009, p. 78). To help dissolve the mystery of good teaching by hearing all the voices and closing the gap for learners, instructors can buy time in discussion groups for the Myers-Briggs sensing types who need three or more seconds to assimilate the substance of each speaker’s concepts into their own ideas before they speak. For Dr. Stoll’s et al. (2009) remaining three discussion skills listed above that tend to draw in complete participation by design, instructors can model and promote these group discussion skills by providing clear easy-to-use guidelines and defining, assigning and rotating group roles—where peers engage in critical reflection. Instructor interventions with quality assurance measures could reduce apprehension and provide the framework to buy time for full participation, and they may help prevent peer-to-peer “topic drift” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1996, p. 245). Since this term has not been used in peer feedback literature, the researcher defines topic drift as the tendency of the group to discuss subject matter that diverges from the original purpose without a coherent connection.
2.3. Delimitations and What is Unknown

Although minimal research has been conducted on peer assessment in North America, the past six years have seen an emergence of peer assessment studies in Europe, Asia, and Australia. In an extensive literature meta-analysis on empirical study trends of peer assessment in higher education from 1990 through 2007, van Gennip et al. (2009) found that “only three studies came close to an experimental control group design, controlling for peer assessment” (p. 47). Of these three studies, only one covered a writing product peer feedback process through both written and oral methods (van den Berg et al., 2006). Additionally, the study by van Gennip et al. (2009) suggests that future research on peer assessment could serve to unravel the effects of self-perceived abilities of the peer assessor, and how receiver learning is affected by the trust students have in self and others. Since the extensive review through 2007 by van Gennip et al. (2009), additional research on peer feedback is still inconclusive and gaps remain in the literature on (1) the self-perceived benefits of peer feedback, (2) how faculty can best implement this process, and (3) in what settings peer feedback improves student learning (Gielen et al., in press; van Gennip et al., in press).

Furthermore, there are a few constraints or boundary limits surrounding peer assessment that can present difficult problems for faculty, particularly (1) students remain skeptical about the value of peer feedback, (2) students are unable and/or concerned about their ability to provide constructive feedback and impartially evaluate, (3) much is unknown about “confidence or trust in self and other in relation to learning effects” (van Gennip et al., 2009, p. 44), (4) instructor/student meanings and practices of epistemological power-sharing may limit student learning in peer feedback, (5) student-centered learning may be limited by the inability of some students to engage in self-reflexive metacognition (Tan, 2009), and (6) the relationship/effect
between learner empowerment and cognitive learning outcomes and academic performance need closer investigation (Schrodt et al., 2008).

2.4. Adult Learners in Collaboration: An Epistemological Power Perspective

According to communication education practitioners Virginia Richmond and James McCroskey (1992),

...power is not something that one person (teacher) has over the other persons (students) in the classroom. Rather, power is something that is negotiated by participants in the instructional process. And when instruction is at its best, questions of power fade into oblivion. When instruction is at its worst, the battle for power becomes central. (p. x)

In an adult educational context with peer and self-assessment methods to test whether knowledge has been acquired, the degree of epistemological power (i.e., who controls the nature of knowledge development?) sharing is affected by student abilities and perceptions of who is responsible to assess their own learning, and how the instructor goes about transferring (or co-creating) knowledge with students through peer-centered learning (Tan, 2009). “Teacher power exists only to the extent that students perceive it to exist and accept it” (Schrodt et al., 2008, p. 181). And according to Sprinkle, Hunt, Simonds, and Comadena (2006), expanding on the seminal work of Richmond and Roach (1992), “power exists in all relationships, regardless of whether it is shared power among equals or one person having power over another…. Power and communication are inextricably linked insofar as individuals assert their power through communication” (p. 390). The traditional teacher-student contradiction where instructors communicate from a position of superiority and maintain complete control of knowledge with legitimate and/or coercive power in the classroom tends to disempower students’ motivation to learn (Schrodt et al., 2008). Hierarchical teaching and learning must be resolved with a prosocial
progressive shift to a reverent classroom before peer-to-peer interaction and cognitive learning can take place (Freire, 2007). Peer learning in an empowered context is critical pedagogy in which a “problem-posing educator constantly reforms his reflections in the reflections of the students” (Freire, 2007, pp. 80-1), so the teacher creates a learning system with neither true knowledge nor true culture by presenting the material/medium to the students for their consideration in action and reflection. Freire (2007) refers to this description as a practice of “co-intentional education” (p. 69), where both teachers and students evolve into subjects who unveil reality together to critically create new knowledge. Thus, questions of who holds the key to construct knowledge (i.e., epistemological power) fade into oblivion.

Learner empowerment in peer feedback processes can create conditions and transferable crosscutting skills where participants grow beyond affective gains on content and subject matter to a “cognitive belief state of personal involvement and self-efficacy [or competence] that ultimately results in a heightened sense of personal effectiveness among [peers] students” (Schrodt et al., 2008, p. 184). Recent research findings by Schrodt et al. (2008) are consistent with and confirm prevailing communication education studies that instructors should communicate primarily with referent power behaviors to create trust in the classroom and enhance learner empowerment. In a classroom “referent power reflects a student’s positive regard for and personal identification with the teacher [and] a feeling of oneness with the teacher, or the desire to have such an identity” (Schrodt et al., 2008). Praxis of co-intentional education coupled with the use of scaffolding in learning (see this concept described in the next section) and referent power by all participants— instructors and students—may cocreate a more effective and appreciative place to learn. Since power to impart knowledge is based on student perceptions, teachers can create a practical safe learning environment with student commitment
to high quality work through authentic, genuine, open, and approachable language and norms (Schrodt et al., 2008).

2.5. Peer Feedback Efficacy and Quality Assurance Measures

“The research evidence is clear that…peer cooperative learning can yield significant gains in academic achievement in a targeted curriculum area” (Topping, 2005, p. 635). There are also gains in affective functioning (i.e., improvements in self-esteem and confidence), and in transferable social, communication and diagnostic problem engagement skills for other contexts—including family, job, recreational activities, and in other learning environments (Book & Putnam, 1992; Dallimore et al., 2008; Topping, 2005; van den Berg et al., 2006). In order to achieve implementation integrity, the peer design method must fit the target purpose, context, and population with quality assurance measures (Topping, 2005). Other quality assurance measures in the design include clear communication, scaffolding, engagement, and error management strategies (Topping, 2005). Communication education scholars Cassandra Book and Joyce Putman (1992) believe there is value in scaffolding that is a progression of student learning mistakes and insights while they “wrestle with new concepts by overlaying and juxtaposing them with familiar concepts and making sense of the concepts for themselves” (p. 20). Sprague (1993) describes these layered learning moments as a challenge “to create finely calibrated interventions that provide the optimal amount of scaffolding to support each student…and knowing when to take down the scaffolding and allow learners to support their own efforts” (p. 357). In this research context, scaffolding referred to discussion and peer review in a progression of more difficult speech assignments to build skills, knowledge and confidence. Speech peer feedback sessions built in complexity through demonstration and informative outline development accompanied by instructor feedback. At the highest point of cooperative
development, students engaged in peer feedback for the capstone persuasive speech and were left
to revise their speech outlines without instructor feedback. Topping (2005) found that these peer-
centered learning strategies are necessary to overcome meta-ignorance deficiencies (where the
peer assessor doesn’t know that s/he doesn’t understand the topic and complexities of peer
feedback); and to overcome other group problems such as time off-task or topic drift (described
above). When students are asked to evaluate, assess, grade, or make quantitative assessments of
the products or outcomes of peer work (in effect placing students too much in a teacher-like
role), they feel social discomfort and end up rating each other as average (Topping, 2005). Non-
judgmental critique in the form of qualitative and formative feedback is likely to be both more
socially comfortable and more useful in supporting metacognitive gains for both assessor and
assessee, but substantive assessment can be cognitively challenging for the peer assessor
(Topping, 2005). The researcher will use the term assessee instead of receiver because this word,
used in extant European and Australian literature, accurately describes the recipient of feedback.
To the researcher’s knowledge, this is the first use of the word assessee for peer feedback
research in American literature.

A significant control group study related to my research focused on written and oral peer
assessment (PA) in seven undergraduate courses (van den Berg et al., 2006). Van den Berg et al.
(2006) found that peer feedback on writing development should relate to design features and be
both written and oral with three features:

Feedback is adequate when (1) peer assessment has a summative (on the basis of a writing
product) as well as a formative character (during the writing process); (2) the assessment is
performed in small feedback groups; [and] (3) the written feedback is orally explained and
discussed with the receiver. (p. 135)
PA is described as a collaborative active learning process tool, not actual collaboration. “ Compared to collaborative … or peer learning [where] students produce a collective outcome, share knowledge and learn from the collaboration,… PA is generally more limited, requiring students simply to assess one another’s work by means of relevant criteria, and to provide feedback” (van den Berg et al., 2006, p. 136). A less evaluative form of PA is peer feedback that can be most valuable for learning in five types of collaborative writing processes—co-writing/completely cooperative, copublishing/cooperative, coresponding/helping obligatory, coediting/helping obligatory, and writing help/helping permitted (van den Berg et al., 2006). The type of task influences the content of peer feedback as well as the learning outcomes. Peer feedback activities for writing may address any or all of four critique areas—(1) plan, (2) compose, (3) review, and (4) correct—that can be completed cooperatively by assignment, voluntarily, or through informal collaboration (van den Berg et al., 2006). Students are generally less interactive over the entire process at the coresponding and coediting levels. “All [feedback] steps include elements of selection: what will be our topic, how shall we structure it, which suggestions for improvement do we use, which style do we stick to?” (van den Berg et al., 2006, p. 136). Coediting, a focus of interest in my study, was the least intensive from an instructional coordination standpoint because each student wrote the original draft individually, and then peers assisted each other during a review/editing process in small groups correcting the last version of the text for grammar, content and structure. How intensive the feedback conversations developed in coediting depended on multiple student interpretations and perceptions of required reading and rubrics, tacit knowledge, student preparation, and understanding of assignment guidelines. A second focus of interest for this study was the coresponding mode.
Van den Berg et al. (2006) found that most PA designs in higher education engaged students in peer feedback at the corresponding mode due to the ease of organizing this in the classroom setting. However, if the objective is to improve learning and students are not properly prepared to provide contextual feedback to pedagogy standards, reviewing other work will not yield higher quality writing (van den Berg et al., 2006). Many novice writers do not succeed in properly reviewing their own work or others because they are not proficient at four assessment steps:

To analyze (what does the text mean, how is it put together?), to evaluate (does the text meet academic requirements?), to explain (for what reason the text goes wrong?), and to revise (what changes are necessary to make the text meet requirements. (van den Berg et al., 2006, p. 137)

This review process is congruent with higher level thinking in Bloom, Engelhart, Hill, Furst, and Krathwohls’ (1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. In van den Berg’s et al. (2006) opinion, peer corresponding may be especially helpful in this four step writing process. Van den Berg et al. added that students, “as a result of applying the assessment criteria to the work of fellow students, also learn to evaluate their own work” (p. 137), thus students engaged at metacognitive levels. For my study, peer participants engaged in appreciative written and oral feedback in combined coediting and corresponding modes congruent with van den Berg’s et al. tested model (analyze, evaluate, explain, revise) described above.

2.6. Design Variables for Outline Draft Development

Topping (2005) developed seventeen typology variables of peer assessment in higher education. From Topping’s seventeen variables, van den Berg et al. (2006) developed seven peer
assessment designs on writing products, one for each class in their study. In the course where students assessed draft outline development, the instructor utilized the following design: (1) peers worked in small groups of three to four, (2) assessors provided written and oral feedback to assesseees, (3) peer assessors and assesseees switched roles to provide two to three assessments for each outline and later the instructor provided additional feedback, and (4) confidentiality was maintained within the feedback group and with the instructor (van den Berg et al., 2006). Reward (in the form of a grade or points) was not part of PA for outline development. However, one of the seven PA designs in the van den Berg et al. study assigned participation points valued at 2.5 percent of the entire course grade. In all seven designs, students received instructor feedback and evaluation only after they received peer feedback (van den Berg et al., 2006). In other words, PA was used in all seven designs as a formative learning tool to improve writing. In analyzing the results of their research, van den Berg et al. generally found that written peer feedback concentrated on content and style instead of on structure, and more on evaluation instead of on analysis, posing more detailed questions or proposing revisions. Conversely, in two courses where students focused on and studied the same material, written peer feedback centered on analysis and revision with more detailed questions and suggestions for improvement (van den Berg et al., 2006). Over all seven courses oral peer feedback provided a good complement to written feedback: “students were less focused on evaluation and engaged more in all four required activities: analysis, evaluation, explanation and revision” (van den Berg et al., 2006, p. 144).

Generally, what does the current empirical evidence on peer assessment indicate about student learning, extending on the concepts of key 20th century practitioners like Dewey, Bloom, Palmer, Freire, Briggs-Myers, and Postman cited above? Good teaching should integrate both
oral and written formative methods, as opposed to relying too heavily on a bank deposit approach. In other words, to close the gap between teaching and learning the focus should be on student-centered learning in a conversational process of cocreating knowledge, instead of the inadequate traditional view of teaching objectives as a sage on the stage, where learners are treated as empty vessels into which wisdom may be poured (Book & Putnam, 1992).

Furthermore, to scaffold (i.e., progressively build on implicit knowledge) students up Bloom’s Taxonomy to higher level cognitive learning requires a planned process in context that takes place during instruction in concert with peer assessment-based feedback to help students and teachers make adjustments that will improve students’ achievement of intended learning outcomes.

Given this framework of the empirical literature, the delimiting factors, and what is still unknown about student-centered learning, my study focused on peer feedback as an active learning formative process during outline development in a public speaking course with suitable (i.e., pro-social) instructor interventions. And, to help increase validity, an instructor end-of-course summative assessment instrument was designed to make correlations with a survey of student self-perceived learning.

2.7. Purpose and Significance of the Research Study

Several of the instructors in the Speech Communication Department at De Anza Community College in Cupertino, CA, use student peer feedback on persuasive speech outline drafts to support the learning process (M. F. Abrahams, personal communication, November 6, 2009). However, there was little consistency between instructor intervention and pedagogy design variables, nor was there open access across the Speech Communication Department to conduct research on peer feedback.
As Gielen et al. (in press) found in their study, peer feedback was expected to support the learning process for the assessee by providing an intermediate check of the performance against established instructor criteria. There can also be benefits for the peer assessor as a result of reviewing other examples or approaches, and from internalizing criteria and standards (Topping, 2005). Van Gennip et al. (in press) concluded that although various studies indicated positive effects of peer assessment on learning, the results are still inconclusive. I agreed with these conclusions on the limits of current peer assessment literature, and found studies specifically on instructor training interventions scant and in need of further examination. With this background information, the purpose of this study was to assess the effects of peer feedback on persuasive speech outline preparation in four course sections of public speaking taught by the same instructor during the Winter quarter, 2010, to extend the previous research, and to provide insight for what is unknown.

2.8. Operational Hypothesis

My operational hypothesis was student peer feedback positively affects persuasive speech outline preparation when adult learners are trained and provided instructions on how to give effective peer feedback in small groups. There were four primary areas of investigation. Specific instructor intervention variables measured in this study included: (1) creation of a safe space for collaboration, (2) student training on the characteristics of effective feedback, (3) student observations of instructor modeling effective feedback, and (4) student training to engage in a carefully designed peer feedback active learning process. These variables were triggered by observations made in peer assessment studies and questions that arose as a result of my literature review on peer assessment.
3. Research Method

3.1. Scope

“Because responsibility for the curriculum belongs to the faculty, goals for student learning in general education and the major must be determined by the faculty” in the classroom, as opposed to institution or program level assessments (Banta, Pike, & Hansen, 2009, p. 23). Moreover, students are the best sources of information about how they perceive and experience their own learning (Banta et al. 2009; Chesebro & McCroskey, 2000). Any model of student learning is complex and varied depending on classroom diversity and dynamic. Palmer (1994) contends we cannot objectify authentic learning through empirical research because each person is a culture unto her or himself; it is more “a maddening mystery” of conflicting stories to embrace through inner reflection that evolves through “the process of conversation itself” (pp. 327-28). There may be a divide or gap between instructor presumptions about the effectiveness of his/her teaching methods and actual student learning. The same instructor using the same pedagogy in two separate classrooms may yield different findings with the same assessment tools, because how people learn is based on each individual learner's life script, how each class interacts in conversation, and based on existing and emerging cocultures (Angelo, 2007; Angelo & Cross, 1993; Domenici & Littlejohn, 2006; Palmer, 1994; Pearce & Pearce, 2001). It was beyond the scope of this study to (1) measure the transferability of small group communication and diagnostic problem engagement skills to other contexts, (2) to assess varied approaches to peer feedback processes among other speech faculty, (3) to measure how the instructor progressively shifts epistemological power sharing in peer-centered learning, (4) to measure the sort of affective relationship the teacher-student is in when good teaching occurs in peer feedback, and (5) to measure what effect implicit perceptions and knowledge have on peer-
centered interaction. However, this research helped to find answers that enabled a particular instructor to reduce the invisible teaching and learning gap for as many students as possible, and the study may provide the framework for other instructors to construct viable peer-centered practices in their classrooms.

3.2. Instructional Design Interventions

This section describes the instructional design interventions in the operational hypothesis used to create a collaborative peer feedback model in the four classes that were the subject of this research. I worked closely with the instructor to design interventions that both emerged as sound practice based on the literature review and fit with the instructor’s approach to teaching. To support consistency for the study, instructional treatment consisted of a sequence of informal and formal preparation for the persuasive speech outline peer review process measured in this study. The first instructional design variable was to create a safe space for collaboration. In each of the four classes, students and the instructor engaged in the cocreation of pro-social norms “for acting in a responsible and supportive manner” (Book & Putnam, 1992, p. 22). Values, procedures, and expectations were shared and made transparent from the beginning of the course. Among the pro-social norms that emerged across the classes were a commitment to open and direct communication, high levels of interaction and engagement, coming to class prepared, staying on task, actively supporting each other, engaging ideas freely without judgment, providing constructive feedback, and listening deeply and respectfully to diverse viewpoints. Students assessed their levels of confidence by completing McCrosky’s (1982) Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) in week two of a twelve-week quarter. Instructor and students discussed PRCA-24 findings that showed students feared speaking in public but felt more confident when working in groups. In addition to articulating their fears, students worked
in groups to create supportive cocultures, prepare speeches, and build confidence. Students engaged in outline peer review for three progressively demanding assignments (on three different occasions) prior to presenting the capstone persuasive speech. The instructor and the literature both referred to this instructional strategy as scaffolding. The second instructional design variable involved training students to effectively give peer feedback. Through instructor modeling and student practice, students developed confidence using reflective listening and “I” (instead of “you”) messages. Third, the instructor role-played (modeled) the peer feedback process using a sample outline so students could visualize exactly what they were expected to do in their peer feedback groups. Fourth, students were provided specific criteria in the form of a rubric written in easy-to-understand language (see Appendix A). Finally, students were given guidelines on how to engage critically in outline content review, how to write constructive comments/feedback on the outline, and how to constructively engage in peer discussion about strengths and suggestions for improvement. Working in three-four person teams, peers first read each other’s outlines, then based on a specific set of questions (see Appendix B) relevant to the assignment criteria, assessors wrote directly on each outline draft at least two comments describing what they especially liked and two additional suggestions for improvement. The team then discussed comments and in conversation negotiated meaning between assessors and assessee. Team members switched roles to provide two-three assessments for each outline. These integrated instructor interventions provided peer feedback quality assurance measures for the research design (summarized in Appendix C).

3.3. Pilot Study for Survey Instrument

The researcher conducted a pilot study to test the survey (see Appendix D) in a Fall 2009 Argumentation class with the same professor and similar student demographics using peer-
centered learning for writing development. Results from the fifteen item Likert scale self-report survey were encouraging with scores ranging from 3.93 to 4.89 on a five-point scale with 27 participants, indicating the instructor had satisfied intervention variables and students’ reported peer feedback was valuable to learning. Here are a few representative qualitative student responses for the following statement from the survey: “Describe how much you changed your paper as a result of peer feedback.”

“At the beginning of the quarter, when I received the first peer feedback, I woke up to some aspects of my writing, i.e. writing clearly from the perspective of a reader. For the final paper, the feedback helped me to organize and make my paper more concise. It also gave me the opportunity to make it livelier by adding examples. All inputs gathered from peer feedback.”

“As a result of peer feedback, I added more information to make the arguments in my papers stronger. Sometimes, I tend to leave out relevant info because I think it is well known or does not need to be stated. Peer review helps me realize that I need to explain things more.”

“I ended up adding several more points of evidence to my paper after the peer review and cleaned up my grammar.”

Based on these quantitative and qualitative pilot study findings, no modifications were made to the survey in Appendix D except to change “paper” to “speech outline” in open-ended question sixteen.

3.4. Participants

This study measured the effects of peer feedback in four public speaking sections with approximately thirty students per class with the same instructor. The sample size or number of
"population elements" (Vacha, 2007, pp. 2-4) was based on the number of classes the researcher had access to collect data from—four, not the total number of students. Participants included a non-random heterogeneous mix of females and males of varying ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds attending De Anza Community College. This mix was a subset of the 22,478 diverse student population with the following demographics: (1) 3.3% African-American, (2) 36.3% Asian, (3) 5.1% Filipino, (4) 11.4% Hispanic, (5) 22.6% Caucasian, (6) 0.6% Pacific Islander, (7) 3.2% Other, (8) 10.5% Unrecorded, (9) 6.8% Multi-Ethnic, (10) 49.8% Female, and (11) 50.2% Male (De Anza College, 2010). No control groups were designated due to equity considerations. All participants conducted written and oral peer feedback embedded within an active learning lesson.

3.5. Design and Instruments

This was a mixed-methods (Melina, 2009) evaluative research analysis/quasi-experimental study conducted in a two-fold process with both quantitative and qualitative measures, with periodic and post-study collegial peer review (Hoyle et al., 2002, p. 338). First, at the end of the outline peer feedback activity students completed an anonymous questionnaire/survey using fifteen five-point Likert Scale items (items six, seven, and ten were reverse scored), and three open-ended questions related to their likes and suggestions for improvement (see Appendix D). The author designed the survey to assess four variables in the operational hypothesis plus overall self-perceived learning—five areas of study:

1. Creation of a safe space for collaboration. These scaled statement(s) derived from several studies cited in Gielen et al. (in press) and from McCroskey’s (1982) PRCA-24 measured students perceived comfort level working with peers. Sample items included: (a) It is
easy to ask my peers for help; (b) Participating in a group peer feedback discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.

2. Student training on the characteristics of effective feedback. These scaled questions measured student perception on whether training in effective feedback characteristics improved the peer feedback process. Gielen et al. found that not all feedback leads to improved performance. Feedback was effective when it was timely so it could serve as a change agent, sufficient in detail, focused on student performance instead of on the student’s personal characteristics, directly relevant to the purpose of the assignment/criteria, contextual to the students knowledge and discourse of the discipline, attended to, and acted upon (Gielen et al., in press). A sample item was: Training on characteristics of effective feedback made it easier for me to give useful peer feedback.

3. Student observations of instructor modeling effective feedback. These scaled statements assessed student perception on whether having the instructor model effective feedback improved the peer feedback process. When the instructor modeled effective feedback for the three speech outlines/presentations prior to the capstone persuasive speech, and/or for the capstone speech, it provided scaffolding to help students construct and engage in effective peer feedback. Sample items included: (a) The teacher modeled effective feedback throughout the quarter; and (b) Having the instructor model effective feedback improved my ability to provide effective peer feedback.

4. Student training to engage in a carefully designed peer feedback active learning process. These scaled statements measured student perceptions on how well they understood what to look for in outline review (see Appendix B), how to engage critically in outline content review, how to write constructive comments/feedback on the outline, and how to
constructively engage in peer discussion about strengths and suggestions for improvement. A sample item was: The peer outline review questions provided by the instructor made it easier for me to give useful peer feedback.

5. Overall perceived learning. These three scaled statements measured self-perceived learning gains: (a) Receiving written peer feedback made it easier to improve my outline; (b) Receiving oral peer feedback made it easier to improve my outline; and (c) Assessing each other taught me to look critically at my own outline (van Gennip et al., 2009).

For the second fold, in a pre-post test design, the instructor utilized a summative persuasive speech/outline rubric jointly created by the researcher and professor (D. G. Stasio, personal communication, various dates) (see Appendix A) to assess student outlines before and after the feedback activity. The rubric included evaluative criteria, quality definitions, and a scoring strategy—all key components of rubric design (Popham, 2003). For the pre-post test design, improvement was measured by examining the average difference in scores between the draft and final outlines (Hoyle et al., 2002, p. 318). Since the outline represented what the student covered in her/his speech, the outline was measured against the first eleven criteria of the Persuasive Speech Rubric, except for the visual aid category (see Appendix A). The instructor evaluated each of ten criterion on a three-point scale (2=exceptional; 1=partially accomplished; 0=developing).

3.6. Procedure

Building on instructor interventions discussed above for the small group peer feedback activity, students were asked to bring two to three copies of their persuasive speech outline and work in teams of three or four organized by their assigned day to present the persuasive speech. At the beginning of the class period the instructor reviewed the objectives and procedures for the
peer review process with students. Instructions were also provided in writing along with the list of review questions. Each small group worked for 40 to 50 minutes writing comments directly on each other’s draft outlines using the *Speech Communication Department Self/Peer Review of Persuasive Speech Outline* questions (see Appendix B), created in collaboration with Donna G. Stasio, cochair of De Anza’s Speech Communication Department (personal communication, various dates), and reviewed by colleagues in the Speech Department. After everyone had a chance to write review comments, each assessor discussed their ideas with each partner/assessee. Assessees were asked to actively listen and converse with assessors to negotiate meaning. Assessors were reminded by the instructor to balance feedback comments between what the speaker did well and areas for improvement. Assessors signed and returned drafts with comments to their peer review partners so participants had the opportunity to reflect on the feedback session and revise their outlines. Students turned in a final outline with attached draft outlines signed by assessors from the peer feedback session the day each presented their persuasive speech. Participation credit was awarded for peer critique valued at two percent towards the final grade for the entire course.

To take advantage of immediacy in the peer feedback session while the experience was still fresh in their minds (Hoyle et al., 2002), the instructor asked students to complete the anonymous questionnaire/survey Likert scale (see Appendix D) within a few days after the small group activity and prior to turning in the final outline. Since peer feedback in this study was formative and designed to enhance the learning process with an intermediate check of the performance utilizing instructor criteria and interventions (Gielen et al., in press), the students needed time to self-reflect and act upon—revise/improve—their speech outlines based on the peer review process (Freire, 2007; Palmer, 2007; Tan, 2009). Students anonymously completed
the author’s survey online through De Anza’s secure institutional research site. Once grades were posted I ran data comparing standard demographics (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, ESL, and highest education). The survey was originally created on SurveyMonkey.com (Stasio, 2009). Clearly the peer feedback design was complex and required careful attention to quality assurance measures (see Appendix C) and instructor pedagogy interventions described above.

3.7. Construct Validity and Reliability

Two collection formats were integrated into the normal flow of classroom learning. However, student completion of the online survey was in no way connected to their class participation or assignment grade. For the first design instrument with quantitative scaled and qualitative items, the researcher and instructor made a computer lab available for students to complete the online survey (see Appendix A) set up in the institutional database. This produced a high participation rate of 89.1 percent for the survey. Quantitative participant survey data (items 1 thru 15) was analyzed by Statistical Analysis System (SAS) software to factor code axial categories derived from Cronbach coefficient alphas, means, standard deviations and minimum-maximum values (Hoyle et al., 2002). For open-ended survey data (items 16 thru 18), inductive analysis and grounded theory with open and axial coding were utilized by manual analysis to collapse qualitative student responses into broader notional core themes (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). These collapsed qualitative student responses or coded data were used to construct and define categories and their properties, also referred to as incidents or “exemplars” (Lindlof & Taylor, p. 234). These exemplars serve as persuasive tools to develop interpretive results, and to increase convergent validity with SAS derived factors.

Participation in the second fold pre-post test of persuasive outlines was nearly 100 percent. The instructor collected a copy of each student’s outline draft on the day of peer review; then
students attached peer-edited drafts to their final speech outlines to submit on the day they presented (i.e., a minimum of five days later). The instructor graded peer-assessed drafts and final outlines with a rubric instrument (see Appendix A) reviewed by colleagues who use similar rubrics to assess persuasive speech outlines. Students did not receive instructor feedback on outline drafts. The researcher compared outline scores, survey results, and actual student performance (on the persuasive speech and overall final grade for the course) using SAS. Data was compiled in the institutional database by having students log into the survey with their campus-wide identification number to assure anonymity and confidentiality, and so comparisons could be made across demographic groups. This mixed-methods approach with formative and summative assessment measures increased reliability through consistency and helped the researcher triangulate to crosscheck the validity of the underlying constructs—peer feedback, instructor interventions, and the effect they had on perceived benefits, student learning and actual performance (Melina, 2009; Vacha, 2007). Since one or more outcomes from each measure were in agreement (i.e. convergent validity), the effects of peer feedback increased reliability and created higher correlations for the study (Hoyle et al., 2002). Additionally, collegial review by full-time faculty members in De Anza’s Speech Communication Department promoted qualitative research validity, credibility, and served as a third measure to correlate the study (Gonzaga, 2009). I studied four classes instructed by a family member, so to control for researcher bias I engaged directly with De Anza College’s institutional researcher to collect and analyze data independent of instructor influence. I also collaborated with and discussed the research design with full-time department faculty not involved in the study (referred to as disinterested peers) at regularly scheduled meetings and by email. Disinterested colleagues periodically played devil’s advocate roles or skeptics, challenged the researcher’s initial design
method, and questioned evidence and correlations for interpretations and conclusions. Finally, to reduce random errors the researcher increased reliability through consistency by comparing four undergraduate courses as an applied evaluative research interpretive analysis (Hoyle et al., 2002, p. 338; Melina, 2009; Vacha, 2007).

3.7.1. Ethical concerns. Based on pedagogical considerations and findings in the literature review that indicate clear learning benefits from peer feedback (given appropriate instructor interventions), it was deemed unethical and unacceptable to create study control groups, random design, and rewards for this study. If design methods to maximize validity were created, “those participants relegated to the control group could” (Hoyle et al., 2002, p. 55) have missed potential positive learning opportunities interacting with peers in the treatment group. “In carrying out research, our quest for knowledge should not come at the price of harm to our participants” (Hoyle et al., 2002 p. 52).

Anonymity was essential to increase reliability in this study, and especially to address participant beneficence (or no harm) concerns (Hoyle et al., 2002). Participants were given the opportunity to opt out of the survey to help address respect concerns (Hoyle et al., 2002). Since students were in an institutionalized setting, a weakness in this study was justice. The justice principle is normally addressed by selecting representative samples and avoids choosing certain groups of participants out of convenience (Hoyle et al., 2002). Prior to conducting any organizational research, and to address respect, beneficence and justice concerns for students, the researcher contacted the institutional research department (run by one person) at De Anza College to determine the need for voluntary opt-out consent forms and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to address ethical design considerations (Hoyle et al., 2002). Consent forms and the IRB are necessary for the college when full student experimentation is taking
place (control groups), and/or a grade or reward is attached to completing a survey, and/or if participants are underage. None of these applied to my study, and furthermore, participant results were protected by anonymity through institutional research controls.

3.7.2. Internal validity. This research concept is defined by a question: “To what extent does the research design permit us to reach causal conclusions about the effect of the independent variable[s] on the dependent variable[s]?” (Hoyle et al., 2002, p. 33). Anonymity increased participants’ open and honest responses and helped to reduce validity and reliability concerns for a nonrandom, no-control group design (Hoyle et al., 2002). Generally, surveys have the advantage of being low cost, but some disadvantages to any survey include a low response rate, design problems in the survey itself, imbalanced sampling, lack of control over question order, and the overall length of the survey (Hoyle et al., 2002). This survey was designed with low systematic error and supported internal consistency reliability. Specifically, it had clear instructions and a clean easy-to-read layout with two or more statements that measured each of the four instructor intervention variables in the operational hypothesis. A study weakness involved anonymity of the online survey, because it was not possible to correlate a specific student’s actual performance evaluated by the instructor with the same student’s self-perceived benefit from instructor interventions and peer feedback. The research focused instead on aggregate correlations through standard constructs such as gender, primary language, age, education level, ethnicity and overall grade point average (GPA). Finally, some participants may have had difficulty with self-reports on reflexive cognitive learning (Tan, 2009). These and other weaknesses such as random or spurious variables (Vacha, 2007) were reduced for both the participant survey and instructor rubric evaluations by interpreting consistency of results from multiple population elements, through triangulation noted in construct validity above, and
through a disinterested collegial peer review process. “The degree of similarity between [population element] scores will reveal the amount of random error in each” (Hoyle et al., 2002 p. 82).

**3.7.3. External validity.** Like internal validity, this concept is also defined by a question: To what extent can we generalize from the results of an empirical research study (i.e., population sample(s), setting(s), and the operational hypothesis) to other people, places, times, and situations? (Hoyle et al., 2002; Rubin, Rubin, & Piele, 2005). Due to the uniqueness of any learning environment noted in the literature review (i.e., knowledge is cocreated from the bottom-up in an iterative process), it is important to recognize that peer feedback and instructor intervention strategies used for student learning in any given classroom may be unreliable in other settings without considering (1) the course outline/syllabus and objectives, (2) the co-cultures and context of each class, (3) epistemological power sharing, (4) training and process monitoring, (5) the unknown effects of student confidence in peer feedback on learning, and (6) teaching and learning variables that are not measured. However, communication skills are formally developed in the study population. Thus, external validity may be high for this study as peer feedback processes for outline development can meet required written and oral communication competencies across many disciplines in our nation’s schools, and interpersonal written and oral peer feedback proficiency can be transferable soft communication skills to workplace settings. Dallimore et al. (2008) emphasize in a peer-centered pedagogy study that “a variety of reports identify verbal and written communication skills as the most important workplace skills for employees” (pp. 163-4), but there is ongoing debate in academia on how best to learn these skills. This study serves to corroborate/validate earlier literature discussions on the effectiveness of peer feedback processes for metacognitive learning, and future research
may seek to measure what impact peer-centered communication skills developed in higher education have in workplace settings.

After findings for this study are assessed and analyzed by colleagues, curriculum and course outlines can include modified versions of this peer feedback model and allow for broader population sampling in future studies. Furthermore, an abstract, assessment instruments, and results of the study will be posted on De Anza College’s SLO Assessment Website and used as an example in SLO/Assessment training sessions to serve as a development model for faculty to use and assess peer feedback in other departments and disciplines. Finally, De Anza faculty may collaborate with other community colleges in California on this peer feedback design.
4. The Study

4.1. Introduction

The study investigated the formative and summative learning impact of written and oral peer feedback processes, and the role of instructor interventions in four public speaking courses. Existing literature on peer-centered learning has various gaps. Of particular relevance to this study are three areas of uncertainty: What are the self-perceived benefits? How can faculty best implement these processes? And, in what contexts does peer feedback improve learning?

The underlying construct or independent variables were peer feedback and instructor interventions to implement peer feedback. Dependent variables or outcomes were student learning and academic performance. The first measurement tool, the peer feedback outline survey, examined self-perceived effect on learning based on instructor interventions to implement peer feedback. The researcher then triangulated academic performance to assess convergent validity with survey results based on students’ writing product in a pre-post test design using a rubric scored by the instructor comparing draft outlines to final outlines, the persuasive speech, and final course grade across demographics.

4.2. Quantitative Analysis

Table 4.1 presents descriptive statistics by factor construct. The results were run by De Anza Community College’s Institutional Research Department according to researcher requests and they are based on SAS principal component analysis, with one as prior communality estimates—principal axis method and varimax rotation. Three primary factor constructs emerged from scaled survey responses with the following Cronbach coefficients: (1) effective feedback training (alpha .80), (2) easiness with group or safe space for collaboration (alpha .68), and (3) overall perceived benefit (alpha .75). The key factor derived from the survey—effective
feedback training—is congruent and validates the last three variables in the operational hypothesis (2) student training on the characteristics of effective feedback, (3) student observations of instructor modeling effective feedback, and (4) student training to engage in a carefully designed peer feedback active learning process. The third coefficient-derived factor, overall perceived benefit, validates the fifth area under evaluation described in the Research Method chapter—overall perceived learning.

Table 4.1
Descriptive Statistics by Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Effective Feedback Training</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Easiness with Group Collaboration</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Overall Perceived Benefit</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. N = 107. See Appendix C for survey items. Effective Feedback Training is the mean score for survey items 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 11 (Cronbach coefficient alpha, 0.80). Easiness with Group Collaboration is the mean score for survey items 6 and 7 (Cronbach coefficient alpha, 0.68). Overall Perceived Benefit is the mean score for survey items 12, 13, and 14 (Cronbach coefficient alpha, 0.75). (Results were run according to researcher requests by De Anza Community College Institutional Research, Lourdes Del Rio-Parent, personal communication, various dates).

Empirical data shows a significant increase between pre-post outline scores (academic performance) with a 27.7 percent overall average increase (see Table 4.2), but no significant differences across demographic groups emerged. This comparative demographic finding is noteworthy because it suggests that peer feedback positively affects outline development but that the teaching pedagogy, peer feedback interventions, and grading outcomes did not bias a particular group. In other words, there was no support for teaching bias in peer-centered processes or from evaluation with a standard rubric (see Appendix A).

Table 4.2
Descriptive Statistics for Variables Included in the Comparative Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Skills Status</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class score: Outline Draft</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class score: Outline Final</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diff in Pre-Post Outline Scores</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>1.8 (27.7% increase)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class score: Persuasive Speech</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course GPA</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cum GPA: Fall 2009</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Ed Degree</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Status (At-Risk)</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Feedback: Instructor Training Effectiveness</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Feedback: Easiness with Group Work Collaboration</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Feedback: Overall Perceived Benefits</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. For coded groups 1 and 0, mean values above .5 favor the 1 group. Basic Skills Status was coded 1 for students enrolled in at least one basic skills course. Class scores are the scores for class task or speech. Course GPA, quality points divided by quality hours, as reported in the student information system. Withdraw was set to 0. Cum GPA: Fall 2009 refers to the cumulative GPA for students enrolled in the quarter of fall 2009. Diff in Pre-Post Outline Scores is the final score for outline minus the score for the draft—used as a measure of improvement. ESL status was coded as 1 for a student enrolled in a course with an ESL top code, and 0 for all others. Gender was coded 1 for female and 0 for male (thus approximately 60% were male). Highest Ed Degree, as reported in the admissions application, where 3 indicates a high school diploma and 7 or higher at least a higher education degree. Minority Status (At-Risk) was coded 1 for Hispanic, Black/African-American, Filipino, or Pacific Islander; and 0 for all others. Asian students represented a majority (36.3%) of the overall De Anza College student population and therefore do not have minority status. Peer Feedback variables refer to each of the three constructs intended to be measured by the Peer Feedback Survey. (Results were run according to researcher requests by De Anza Community College Institutional Research, Lourdes Del Rio-Parent, personal communication, various dates).

However, English as a Second Language learners (ESL) \( (N = 9 \text{ students from the entire sample see Table 4.3}) \) reported mean scores below non-ESL students \( (N = 98) \) on self-perceived benefits of two construct factors: (1) instructor training interventions, and (2) easiness with group collaborative work. But these self-perceptions had no effect on actual academic performance as measured against average course GPA. In reading these results, the ESL designation represented only non-native speakers enrolled in at least one ESL developmental course, and the results did
not represent the population of non-native speakers and English Language Learners (ELL) enrolled in the four general education Public Speaking sections (approximately 60 percent of the total student body). Since ELL and non-native speakers that had not enrolled in at least one ESL course represented the majority, the college data base system did not recognize this group as a demographic for my empirical study correlations.

Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Mean Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easiness with Group Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a Second Language (ESL)</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-ESL or ELL Student</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ESL N = 9 learners identified as students that took at least one English as a Second Language course at some point to date at the college. Non-ESL or ELL N = 98 students who did not take at least one English as a Second Language course at some point to date at the college. (Results were run according to researcher requests by De Anza Community College Institutional Research, Lourdes Del Rio-Parent, personal communication, various dates).

Completion of at least one basic skills course and years of education were the two best predictors of performance gains for the small population of ESL students (see Table 4.4). Keep in mind the ESL population sample size does not permit the researcher to draw definitive conclusions for this group, but does raise questions for future research. And since the research did not support teaching bias across any other demographic, all participants including at-risk students (i.e., Minority Status at approximately 20 percent, see Table 4.2) appeared to benefit from peer-centered collaboration.
Table 4.4
Relationship Between Demographics (Age, Gender, ESL Status, Education, and At-Risk Status) and Gains in Peer Feedback, as Measured by the Difference Between Draft and Final Outline Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Diff in Pre-Post Outline Scores</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>ESL</th>
<th>Minority Status (At-Risk)</th>
<th>Basic Skills Status</th>
<th>Cum GPA: Fall 2009</th>
<th>Highest Ed. Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diff in Pre-Post Outline Scores</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Status (At-Risk)</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Skills Status</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cum GPA: Fall 2009</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Ed. Degree</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A statistically significant correlation is any probability value less than .05.

Notes. There were significant differences between Pre-Post Outline Scores, but not across groups. Manova for Basic Skills Status provided no significant results from SAS output. (Results were run according to researcher requests by De Anza Community College Institutional Researcher, Lourdes Del Rio-Parent, personal communication, various dates).

Going back to the bigger picture, empirical data indicates students that reported gains from effective instructor peer training interventions also reported overall benefits from peer feedback, and student final draft outline scores were a predictor of persuasive speech scores (see Table 4.5). All students who started the course with higher cumulative GPAs also performed better on both the final outline and persuasive speech (see Table 4.5).

Finally, mean score results varied across the four class sections with a high of 92 percent to a low of 78 percent on the final outline, and a high of 91 percent to a low of 82 percent on the
persuasive speech, but generally the empirical data gave no support for pedagogy demographic bias (i.e., by gender, ethnicity, age, at-risk, etc).

Table 4.5
Relationship Among Scores on Effectiveness of Peer Feedback and Performance Scores on Final Outline and Persuasive Speech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Work</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Benefits</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Training</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Score: Outline</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Score: Persuasive</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Course GPA</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001*</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A statistically significant correlation is any probability value less than .05.

Notes. N = 107. There was significant improvement between pre-post outline scores with an overall average academic performance improvement of 27.7% (see Table 4.2), but no significant scores were noted across demographic groups. Students that reported gains from effective instructor peer training interventions also reported overall benefits from peer feedback. Student final draft outline scores are a predictor of persuasive speech scores. Students coming into the course with higher cumulative GPAs also performed better on both the final outline and persuasive speech. (Results were run according to researcher requests by De Anza Community College Institutional Researcher, Lourdes Del Rio-Parent, personal communication, various dates).

4.3. Qualitative Analysis

Tables 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8 were constructed prior to running quantitative SAS results and therefore core qualitative themes were in no way influenced by the SAS factor constructs. These tables present “collapsed” inductively developed core themes by manual analysis from participant responses to three open-ended survey questions 16, 17, and 18 respectively through
“logics of association,” also referred to as “axial coding” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 221) —

(16) Describe how you will change your persuasive speech outline as a result of peer feedback, if at all. (17) What did you like most about peer feedback? Why? (18) How can the instructor improve the peer feedback process? The additive results in collapsed categories may exceed 100 percent (e.g., if a student planned to add evidence, research, and strong supporting sources to their outlines—these three key items would be collapsed into the same thematic notional category as three separate entries).

4.3.1. Changes to outline. In Table 4.6 students consistently identified several substantial changes that they would make to their outlines based on peer feedback. On average each student identified 4.8 modifications in their open essay responses. The dominant thematic variable or significant exemplar (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) was to make arguments more substantive and persuasive by adding evidence, research, sources, statistics, depth, and counterargument (rank #1/123%). Another notable theme indicated students planned to more directly follow an organizational pattern appropriate to persuasive speaking and add clear transitions to strengthen the structure of their speeches (rank #2/65%). Ranking 3, 4, and 5 respectively, students wanted to appeal more to the audience (58%), use examples and personal stories to make their speeches more interesting (52%), and clarify their positions (52%) in their outlines.
Table 4.6
Inductively Developed Core Themes

Manual analysis method from participant responses to statement # 16 from researcher’s survey:
Describe how you will change your persuasive speech outline as a result of peer feedback, if at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank and %</th>
<th>Thematic Notional Category</th>
<th>Key Terms</th>
<th>Typical Participant Responses Based on Peer Feedback Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 123%</td>
<td>Evidence/ Strong supporting details/ Counterargument</td>
<td>Increase persuasion with evidence, research, sources, statistics, depth, counterargument, and added main and sub-points.</td>
<td>“I will use more specific data.” “I will add better information and look up sources more.” “I will add details to my main points like statistics to make my points more compelling.” “I will add more to my counterargument.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 65%</td>
<td>Organization/ Signposts/ Transitions</td>
<td>Increase clarity with structure, main point organization, or transitions. Use an appropriate organizational pattern such as statement of reasons, problem solution, or refutation.</td>
<td>“I need to do a little re-organizing (mostly combining topics that are similar instead of treating them as separate topics).” “I need to make sure my main points are concise and affirmative.” “I will make my statement of reasons more concise.” “Use problem-solution.” “Use refutation to persuade an audience to support my point.” “Have better transitions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 58%</td>
<td>Appeal to audience</td>
<td>Missing class survey results, attention getter, or call to action. More engaging and interactive.</td>
<td>“Refer to my class survey. I take it to heart and change whatever is needed to fit to allow a connection with the audience.” “I will adjust my introduction to make it more engaging and interactive.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 52%</td>
<td>Examples/ Appeal to pathos/ Personalize</td>
<td>Increase interest or engage with good example and personal story.</td>
<td>“I need to support my arguments with more and various examples.” “I will add more pizzazz and emotion.” “I need to personalize my introduction more and elaborate on how the subject affects me and my personal experience.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 52%</td>
<td>Narrow topic/ Clarify proposition</td>
<td>Directly state or clarify proposition/ thesis statement/ position</td>
<td>“I need to have a stronger position.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 39%</td>
<td>Cite sources</td>
<td>Clearly cite and explain sources. Correct works cited page.</td>
<td>“I'm going to add more citations and quotes to make it more credible” “Try to quote my sources to try and make my speech more convincing and credible.” “Correct the entries on my works cited page.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7 33%</td>
<td>Visual Aids</td>
<td>Improve, change or add visuals to speech.</td>
<td>“I need to find better visual aids that will assist me in persuading the audience. They advised me to find some pictures about student's life, student's activities, and student's success.” “I need to provide a visual to captivate the audience.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percents are “collapsed” broader category from participant responses through “logics of association,” or through what is called “axial coding” and may exceed 100% (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 221).

4.3.2. **What participants liked most.** In Table 4.7, the synergistic group process of receiving multiple perspectives at once to improve outlines (45%) emerged as the significant exemplar. One student wrote, “My peers were genuinely helping me and trying to make the best of my speech and performance.” This essential finding and the next one below were consistent with and validate part one of the operational hypothesis—creation of a safe space for collaboration—and these findings increased convergent validity of quantitative SAS resultant factor, “easiness with group collaboration.” Ranked second, students appreciated the quality of feedback in the form of constructive criticism (41%). This second thematic variable encompassed perceptions that peers could help each other develop stronger arguments, explain why something should be changed and gave insights into how to make changes. For the third most frequently cited category (27%), students felt they were able to see their topic from multiple viewpoints that supported innovation and creativity, often in a light different from what they would have thought of themselves. Here a student said, “I like how other students think out of the box and give you other opinions and different views on your topic.”
# Table 4.7

**Inductively Developed Core Themes**

Manual analysis method from participant responses to question # 17 from researcher’s survey:

What did you like most about peer feedback? Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank and %*</th>
<th>Thematic Notional Category</th>
<th>Key Terms</th>
<th>Typical Participant Responses Based on Persuasive Speech Outline Peer Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| #1 45%       | Synergistic group process of receiving multiple perspectives at once to improve outline | Fun, genuine, honest opinions, able to talk freely w/ teammates, comfortable, personal, connected, all working on same thing, everyone helping one another, took job seriously, ample time to make improvements based on feedback | “I like how all my peers tried to be helpful.”
“My peers were genuinely helping me and trying to make the best of my speech and performance.”
“Honesty. Because there is no sugar coat and I can actually improve on my work.”
“Not only did it give me a chance to connect with my fellow peers, but it also gave me advice on what I can do to improve and what I did well.... I was able to gain more confidence in knowing what the class liked.”
“Feedback was always fun, never a chore.”
“We are all doing the same thing writing the same type of outlines so we all have similar issues that we can discuss with one another in a comfortable setting.” |
| #2 41%       | Substantive feedback on weaknesses to improve outline | Positive comments on weaknesses, positive criticism, how to improve and make stronger arguments | “Just getting to know how to improve myself.”
“Classmates explained why something should be changed and how it should be changed.”
“They helped me make my arguments sound stronger.”
“It’s actually feedback and not ‘I like it, it’s good’ or ‘I don’t like this, it’s bad.’ My peers want decent feedback like me and so we all make sure to give a detailed specific review.” |
| #3 27%       | See topic in a different light | See topic in a different light, see topic from a viewpoint never would have thought of myself, think outside the box | “I like how other students think out of the box and give you other opinions and different views on your topic.”
“I liked the different perspectives…. Multiple viewpoints [provide] several ideas I would have never thought of.”
“It is always better to have more than one perspective for editing something. Not just for speeches, but anything else you have to create/produce/prepare, constructive criticism is one of the best things to help you improve.” |
| #4 19%       | Audience perceptions of topic | Audience perspective, feedback from people that you need to engage during speech, get to know what audience thinks before you present your ideas | “It gives an audience perspective.”
“The thing I like most…is that you are getting suggestions from people in the class that will be your audience during your speech.
“It gave me a taste of what my audience would like to hear.”
“They can give me their opinion on whether my outline is engaging or not. This is helpful because it will allow [me] to improve my outline and deliver a more interesting speech.” |
| #5 16%       | Get ideas from peers outlines | Reviewing speech outlines helped me improve my own | “I liked that we could get ideas from others speeches and implement them into ours.”
“When you read others’ outlines, you discover new strengths and weaknesses that might apply to your own outline.” |
| #6 9%        | Receiving feedback on things done well | Positive comments on strengths, balance between suggestions and what did well | “I liked how even though my classmates gave me feedback about things I needed to work on, they still commented on things that they liked about my outline that they thought I did well.” |

* Percentages are “collapsed” broader categories from participant responses through “logics of association,” or through what is called “axial coding” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 221).
4.3.3. Ways to improve peer feedback process. Core theme Table 4.8 presents data on how the instructor could improve the peer feedback process. No changes ranked first (45%), followed by instructor should sit in on feedback groups (41%), and additional time for peer review (27%).

Table 4.8
Inductively Developed Core Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank and %</th>
<th>Thematic Notional Category</th>
<th>Key Terms</th>
<th>Typical Participant Responses Based on Persuasive Speech Outline Peer Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 45%</td>
<td>No changes</td>
<td>No changes, perfect as is, nothing, works well, not much room for improvement</td>
<td>“It’s great the way it is.” “I think that the peer feedback process works well. “Nothing. I think the sheets with the speech requirements on it are a great help in doing feedback.” “I don’t think she can. Improving it would make it beyond perfect.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 41%</td>
<td>Instructor sit in on feedback groups</td>
<td>Instructor circulate to each group</td>
<td>“Perhaps sitting in on some of the feedback groups, and offer insight about some of the outlines in the group.” “Perhaps she can go around to each group and ask what they have discussed.” “The instructor can stop by every table to hear the discussions and add her feedback.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 27%</td>
<td>More time</td>
<td>Give more time for peer review</td>
<td>“Maybe have more than one day [for each speech] to get feedback from classmates.” “Maybe she should give us more time.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percentages are “collapsed” broader categories from participant responses through “logics of association,” or through what is called “axial coding” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 221).

4.4. Discussion

The most significant finding from both empirical and axial coded qualitative results supports the operational hypothesis that given specific instructor interventions, peer feedback had a positive effect on higher-level cognitive learning and academic performance. Of three factorial constructs derived from the quantitative scaled responses, the instructor modeling effective feedback and providing training and guidelines emerged with the highest internal
consistency reliability. This key axial construct contributed to significant positive results on effective peer feedback, student learning, and academic performance. Through SAS software analysis, this construct also had high communal association with survey item number eleven—student confidence to deliver a persuasive speech.

Results from the three qualitative tables increased convergent validity with factors derived from scaled quantitative items indicating that when positive learning relationships have been established, a cohort of learners engaged in a clearly defined peer feedback process creates positive learning outcomes. Receiving recognition and feedback on things done well sustained students with positive energy to deliver improved persuasive speeches. The instructor and students created environments using language that cocreated a place where most of the students flourished, including at-risk students. Anecdotal survey responses (also supported by the literature review) indicated that learner empowerment in peer feedback created “cointentional education” (Freire, 2007), where both teacher and students evolved into subjects who unveiled reality together and where the concept of teacher as authority faded into oblivion. Based on results of the study, students found peer feedback “genuinely helpful” and felt there was little or no need for change in the peer feedback process.

In analyzing the empirical data, I was particularly interested to know who benefited the most and who benefited the least based on perceived benefits, improvement from pre-post outline scores, performance on persuasive speech, and overall success in the course. Results indicated the majority of students benefited from peer collaboration. There was no evidence to support that one demographic group benefited more than any other.

Of note, ESL learners reported mean scores below non-ESL students on self-perceived benefits of instructor training interventions and easiness with group collaborative work. I found
noteworthy that this self perception had no apparent effect on actual academic performance as measured against average course GPA. Making connections between these empirical results and anecdotal survey responses, it appears ESL students found active participation and exchanging ideas in the peer feedback process helpful, however most ESL learners had added difficulty writing their outlines (shown in pre-post outline scores), and they may have experienced added anxiety and fears of expressing themselves through written and oral critique methods on peer work. This assumption is supported by Merrill and Gilberts’ (2008) observation: “Peer-collaboration requires deeper processing for students to make their intent clear to their collaborators” (p. 202).

Contrary to ELL students, this appears to be more of a challenge for ESL learners who may have to work harder to find the words to make their ideas clear. ESL students were more likely to want additional time for peer review and several ESL students responded in open-ended survey responses that they would like the instructor to provide feedback on their outlines. Although these recommendations may appear impractical given thirty or more students in small groups engaged in peer review for a fifty-minute class period—a mindful instructor may build informal peer dialogue into the course design leading up to the persuasive peer feedback event and even set aside five or so minutes per team (and if time permits set time aside to review the outline with each student) during and/or apart from the actual peer feedback session to engage at some level in the outline review process. I do realize this may present a paradox, as the point of the study was to measure peer, not instructor feedback. This finding of ESL student preference for instructor over peer feedback merits future research by looking more closely at the power-sharing limits of student learning in peer feedback across various demographic groups and specifically with a larger, more significant population of ESL students. As noted in the research
method chapter, it was beyond the scope of this study to measure epistemological power sharing in peer-centered learning.

Looking at the bigger picture, both quantitative and qualitative results indicate that the peer feedback design worked well for most students with a 27.7 percent overall average increase in academic performance and no significant differences across demographic groups emerged. Key empirical findings support the number one qualitative response in Table 4.8 that “no changes” were needed for the peer feedback process. The anonymity of the survey cross-checked in a triangulation approach allows this finding to be interpreted at face value with the whole in mind. Meaning the second and third exemplars on Table 4.8 were noteworthy and discussed above.
5. Summaries and Conclusions

I set out to measure the efficacy of peer feedback given four instructor intervention variables that would benefit the largest cross section of students in a diverse community college population. There was no evidence to support the idea that one demographic group benefited more than any other. The analysis of survey data validates all four variables in the operational hypothesis as well as overall perceived benefits of peer feedback in student learning and academic performance. Student peer feedback positively affected persuasive speech outline preparation when adult learners were trained and provided instructions on how to give effective peer feedback in small groups. The study also enriches the conversation on peer-center learning and helps fill three gaps of uncertainty described in the literature: (1) self-perceived benefits, (2) best way to implement these processes, and (3) contexts for peer feedback to improve learning.

5.1. Limitations of the Study

Mean final outline and persuasive speech scores varied notably across the four class sections confirming the idea set forth in the literature review that no two classes are the same, even if they are taught by one instructor with the same pedagogy (Angelo, 2007; Angelo & Cross, 1993; Domenici & Littlejohn, 2006; Palmer, 1994; Pearce & Pearce, 2001). Teacher and students cocreate classroom culture and learning in the ever-changing dynamic conversation that Palmer (1994) described as a “maddening mystery…. A method that lights one class afire extinguishes another. An approach that bores one student changes another’s life” (p. 327). Due to varied mean scores across class sections by as much as fourteen percent on final outline performance, I suggest future studies on peer-centered work to consider a full case study exploration of cocultures that emerge within each class to shed light on the mysteries that surround classroom learning dynamics. This study supports the premise that peer feedback and
formative assessment must be modified to fit an instructor’s learning outcomes and teaching approach at the classroom level, and in order to create a safe learning environment for students, each instructor should be comfortable with her/his pedagogy. Longitudinal studies are not congruent with the nature of formative assessment and would miss the mark on tacit cultural variables critical to varied teaching and learning norms and perceptions.

The results of this study were limited by a small sample across four sections taught by one instructor. Extending the research method to more classes within and/or across disciplines could inform and validate findings. The survey instrument could be improved by adding more items to measure the factorial construct “easiness with group or safe space for collaboration.” Only two survey items were used to derive this construct using SAS software analysis. Finally, the small ESL population did not permit the researcher to draw definitive conclusions about the disparity between self-perceived peer feedback benefits and actual performance among this demographic group.

5.2. Conclusions

Peer feedback is “most effective when thoughtfully orchestrated” (Merrill & Gilbert, 2008, p. 199) around a common task-centered process “with a reasonable degree of direction and structure” (Merrill & Gilbert, 2008, p. 200; Frey, 1999; Gielen et al., in press; Topping, 2005; van Gennip et al., in press) that effectively combines both written and oral feedback (van den Berg et al., 2006). Learning and feedback processes are further promoted when students observe the instructor model and/or demonstrate these skills throughout the quarter.

The peer feedback process opens up multiple pathways for thinking about and framing ideas from diverse audience-centered perspectives. This is congruent with a recurrent theme that materialized in the education literature. Through focused conversation people create something
new together in an iterative process (Bohm, quoted in Stewart et al., 2004; Cross, 1990; Dewey, 1916; Freire, 2007; Frey, 1999; Kolb, 1984; Luotto & Stoll, 1992; Palmer, 1994, 2007; Pearce & Pearce, 2001; Sprague, 1993, 1999; and Voegelin, quoted in Stewart et al., 2004). In other words by engaging in peer feedback students were drawn into the process—into the conversation where they cocreated knowledge in a bottom-up student-centered approach and as a result significantly improved outline scores and confidence to deliver their persuasive speeches. In addition, as borne out by the literature, students in the study learned to evaluate and reflect on their own work as a result of applying peer feedback guidelines/criteria to the work of others. Students who participated in peer feedback and completed the survey identified on average 4.8 substantive changes to their outlines and positively endorsed the peer feedback process.

5.3. Further Study and Recommendations

As noted under the limitations section, further studies may consider a complete case study approach to go deeper into students’ lives and backgrounds, but this may require a full IRB, consent forms, and a team of accomplished researchers. Each classroom environment should be engaged through the lens of multiple cultures. Like organizations that have restructured into learning systems with natural impulses to transform and create new realities, classrooms are complex human communication learning systems of relationships that develop unique cocultures. Our hope as educators is to produce lifelong learners that can restructure their views of reality and discern falsehoods to cocreate better futures. “In order to survive, organizations [and classrooms] must develop the ability to change themselves continuously in a fundamental manner” (Burnes, 2006, p. 148), thus creating a real paradox as so many organizations and people are resistant to change with deeply embedded cultural patterns and assumptions that affect performance (Schein, 2006). When we empower students to become participants and
cocreators of knowledge through both written and oral communication, we take them to the highest level of cognitive development and academic performance. Instructors should consider how scaffolding and interventions would impact peer-centered group dynamics, and at what point students are ready to take risks to think on their own (Sprague, 1999). True liberation, learning, change, and innovation for a classroom, organization, or society is actually a process by which all participants in communion liberate each other from the inside-out through cultural synthesis (Freire, 2007). With increasingly diverse populations interacting together in a global village (McLuhan & McLuhan, 1988; McLuhan & Powers, 1989), there may be value in adapting this study to organizations and online instruction in higher education as society progressively creeps into a high-tech mediated world in speed of light information flux. “The old pattern of education in answer-finding [with fixed concepts] is of no avail…. Survival and [transformative learning] will depend on the ability to probe and to question in the proper way and place” (McLuhan & McLuhan, 1988, p. 239). Knowledge changes one conversation at a time.
References


Gonzaga University (2009). *Methods of organizational research—COML 501; Table 1: Strategies Used to Promote Qualitative Research Validity*. Retrieved November 25, 2009, from Gonzaga University, Blackboard Academic Suite Website:


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## Appendix A

### Persuasive Speech Rubric

**Speaker:** ______________________________  **Instructor** __________________

**Class Hour** ______________  **Topic** ______________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Exceptional</th>
<th>Partially Accomplished</th>
<th>Developing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attention Getter</strong></td>
<td>Captivates audience with attention getting strategy (quote, statistic, question, story, etc.). Gains listeners' attention, appeals to values, and introduces topic.</td>
<td>Uses relevant attention getting strategy, but did not seem to appeal to values or lead to desired outcome.</td>
<td>Needs attention getter that appeals to values and clearly connects to topic and/or speech purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connection w/Audience</strong></td>
<td>Clearly makes topic &amp; purpose relevant to audience. Thoughtful audience analysis reflected through choice of topic, use of class survey results, and audience messages. Speaker makes direct personal connection to topic.</td>
<td>Topic seems somewhat relevant to audience, but not explicitly stated. Vague reference to audience needs and/or interests based on class survey results. Limited personal connection to topic.</td>
<td>Need to connect topic to targeted audience. Need to appeal to audience with class survey results. Need direct personal connection to topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Statement/Proposition Preview</strong></td>
<td>Clear proposition and preview in introduction lead smoothly into the speech. Proposition identifies position on topic. Proposition focused and narrowed in scope.</td>
<td>Position clearly implied, although not explicitly stated or narrowed in scope. Main points are not clearly previewed.</td>
<td>Needs clear proposition. Position not clearly stated. Need to add preview of main points in introduction to clarify direction of the message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Uses organizational pattern appropriate for persuasive speaking. Main points are clearly distinguished from supporting details. Signposts are used for smooth and coherent transitions. Easy to identify introduction, body, and conclusion.</td>
<td>General structure/organization seems adequate but some blurring between main points and supporting evidence. Logical flow, but no clear signposts for smooth transitions. Need more distinction between introduction, body, and conclusion.</td>
<td>Need to choose an organizational pattern appropriate for persuasive speaking. Need to include clear, fluid transitions to make it easier to identify introduction, main points, and conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Logical Appeal (x2)</strong></td>
<td>Presents sound arguments to support major claim. Supports arguments with sufficient, relevant and valid evidence in the form of cases/examples, statistics, quotes from authorities, explanations, etc.</td>
<td>Provides support for main points, but need to elaborate further with evidence in the form of cases/examples, statistics, quotes from authorities, explanations, descriptions, etc. Need a variety of types of reasoning.</td>
<td>Arguments need stronger support in the form of cases/examples, statistics, quotes from authorities, etc so arguments are more convincing. Need a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Improvements</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions, etc.</td>
<td>Skillfully uses a variety of types of reasoning.</td>
<td>Has minor reasoning fallacies.</td>
<td>Variety of types of reasoning and/or to avoid fallacies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Appeal</td>
<td>Ethically appeals to audience emotions (anger, fear, compassion, etc.) to achieve persuasive goal.</td>
<td>Appeals to audience emotions (anger, fear, compassion, etc.) to achieve the persuasive goal, but needs to observe ethical responsibilities. Need more effective imagery through language and stories.</td>
<td>Inappropriately appeals to audience emotions and/or needs to use vivid or descriptive language or stories to capture audience emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Survey</td>
<td>Thoughtfully uses class survey results.</td>
<td>Vague reference to class survey results.</td>
<td>Need to clearly tie in class survey results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Aid</td>
<td>Effectively uses visual aid.</td>
<td>Could use visual aids more effectively.</td>
<td>Needs visual aid(s), or needs to use visuals in a way that does not distract from the speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterargument (x2)</td>
<td>Skillfully states and refutes at least one counterargument. Follows 3 steps of counterargument: state, agree or disagree, refute with evidence.</td>
<td>Counterargument is evident but needs to be more fully developed.</td>
<td>Need to clearly identify and refute counterargument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source Credibility (x3)</td>
<td>Identifies and correctly cites at least 3 sources of information. Establishes credibility and authority of sources presented.</td>
<td>Most sources are clearly cited, but need to establish credibility and authority of sources presented.</td>
<td>Need to identify and cite sources and establish credibility and authority of sources presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Skillfully develops conclusion with a cue, summary, audience appeal, memorable close and call to action.</td>
<td>Conclusion evident but incomplete. Conclusion needs to be more fully developed.</td>
<td>Speech ends abruptly and inconclusively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q &amp; A</td>
<td>Directly and confidently responds to questions. Follows q&amp;a procedures: restate, respond, confirm.</td>
<td>Somewhat confident responding to q&amp;a.</td>
<td>Need to respond directly and confidently when responding to q&amp;a. Need to follow q&amp;a procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>Consistently and effectively uses eye contact to establish rapport and engage audience. Extends eye contact throughout the audience. Inconspicuously uses 3x5 note cards.</td>
<td>Need to rely less on notes. Need fewer notes on 3x5 note cards. Seems disengaged from audience for noticeable periods of time.</td>
<td>Need to read less from speech notes/manuscript. Extend eye contact more to audience so you have more than occasional and sporadic glances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extemporaneous/Engaging Delivery (x3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Language</td>
<td>Appears confident and natural with posture, gestures, and facial expression. Body language reflects confidence interacting with audience.</td>
<td>Body language worked well, although could work more on gestures, posture, and/or facial expressions. Body language could reflect more confidence interacting with the audience.</td>
<td>Body language reflects a reluctance to interact with audience. Need to avoid distracting non-verbals such as hands in pockets, awkward movement or other self adaptive behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm/Conviction</td>
<td>Voice projects confidence, enthusiasm, and conviction appropriate to persuasive speaking. Voice was loud enough to hear easily. Uses rate, volume, pitch, and pause effectively.</td>
<td>Voice could project more confidence, enthusiasm, and conviction appropriate to persuasive speaking.</td>
<td>Add more volume, life, and enthusiasm in your voice for more message impact and in order to engage the audience’s attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal Dynamics (x2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Slow delivery rate some for more message impact.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>Appeared well prepared, confident, and comfortable, which enhanced your credibility. No vocalized fillers.</td>
<td>Delivery could be more practiced and polished. Minimal use of vocalized fillers.</td>
<td>Much more practice needed for a more polished, fluent delivery. Try to pause where you are using pause fillers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 5-6 min. + 2 min q&amp;a (x2)</td>
<td>Stays within 30 seconds of 5-6 min. time requirement.</td>
<td>30 seconds over or under 5-6 min time requirement.</td>
<td>1 minute over or under 5-6 min time requirement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deduction** –5 for late speech

**Scoring:** 0-34 = Developing, 35-39 = Partially Accomplished, 40-44 = Solid/Good, 45-50 = Exceptional

Time _____________________ Total Score _______________________/50

(Created collaboratively by the author and Professor Donna Stasio, personal communication, various dates)
Appendix B
Winter Quarter 2010 – Speech Communication Department
Self/Peer Review of Persuasive Speech Outline
(Jointly created by author and Donna G. Stasio, personal communication, various dates)

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) 1 + 3 (measures subsets of both)

SLO #1. Develop original, organized, informative and persuasive presentations that are personalized to the audience, developed with an effective plan and purpose, and uses information supported with quality sources that are accurately documented during the speech and in speech outlines.

SLO #3. Collaborate with peers to reflect on the effectiveness of presentations, and to provide positive, growth-producing feedback.

Instructions: (total 40-50 minutes)
Self/Peer Review Guidelines
1. Each student brings 3-4 copies of her/his outline.
2. Review the peer review outline questions below with speakers scheduled to present on the same day as you (3-4 students per group/cluster).
3. Our goal is to give thoughtful feedback and to give the speaker an idea of what a subset of the audience thinks about his/her ideas. Be mindful of the following—
   a. offer at least two comments on what you especially like and two suggestions for improvement based on what you find most relevant from the questions listed below.
   b. make an effort to use “I” instead of “you” messages, or word your suggestions in a question form.
   c. be sure to balance your comments between what the speaker has done well and areas for improvement.
4. First read through the outline. Then go back and write your comments directly on the draft. The cluster will then discuss comments with the speaker. The speaker will be part of the conversation—in effect negotiating meaning. Use reflective listening to ensure you understand the message. Each speaker determines what peer feedback they will use in revising outlines.
5. Give one copy of your outline draft to the instructor on day of peer review.
6. Peer reviewers sign your name on the draft outline and hand it back to the speaker. The speaker will attach these to his/her final outline that is due the day they present.
7. Your cluster may want to work through one speaker’s outline + discussion before moving on to the next speaker.

INTRODUCTION
1. Does the speaker include all parts of the introduction (attention getter, audience message, credibility statement, thesis statement/proposition, preview)?
2. What can the speaker do to make the introduction more compelling, personalized, and audience centered?
3. What can the speaker do to make the proposition and preview more clear?
BODY
4. What supporting materials/proof do you find most compelling/persuasive? What content would make the speech more persuasive?
5. Does the speaker develop at least one main point counterargument? How could the speaker make the counterargument more persuasive?
6. What can the speaker do to improve logical and emotional appeals?

CONCLUSION
7. Does the speaker include all parts of the conclusion (cue, summary, audience appeal, memorable close/call to action)?
8. What can the speaker do to make the conclusion more compelling/memorable?

SOURCES
9. Does the speaker clearly cite at least three credible sources in the outline and in the works cited list? Is there enough information that you understand the source?
10. Are corrections needed to the works cited list?

ORGANIZATION
11. Is the speaker’s organizational strategy appropriate to the topic and to persuasive speaking?
12. What can the speaker do to develop effective and smooth transitions?

CLASS SURVEY RESULTS
13. Does the speaker effectively use class survey results?

OUTLINE
14. What suggestions do you have for improving the outline?

TEAM SUPPORT
15. How can your team members help you?
16. Who will present 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th?
17. What is your game plan for practicing your speech?
18. What about this speech do you find most challenging?
19. What do you fear most?
## Appendix C

**Peer Feedback Quality Assurance Measures** (Derived by author from literature review)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Assurance Measure</th>
<th>Design Intervention</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does peer design method fit target purpose, content, and population?</td>
<td>Peer feedback process designed for co-editing and co-responding appropriate to level of course.</td>
<td>Peer review questions. Rubric. Peer feedback training.</td>
<td>Yield higher quality writing and oral feedback. Improve speech relevance through advanced interaction with subset of audience. Awareness in the process of sense making becomes unique to each person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What in the design will reduce student anxiety associated with evaluative peer feedback?</td>
<td>Confidential, non-evaluative critique in form of qualitative feedback. Students will not be asked to grade or score peer work. Students will balance feedback on strengths and suggestions and for each suggestion will (1) describe what could be changed and why, and (2) describe how these changes could be made.</td>
<td>Clear and consistent written criteria focused on formative, non-evaluative peer feedback. Include confidentiality statement. Training in how to give effective written and oral feedback. Survey questions to measure anxiety associated with engaging in the peer feedback process.</td>
<td>Increase student confidence in giving and receiving peer feedback. Reduce anxiety associated with evaluative (assigning grades/scores) peer feedback. Balance strengths and suggestions. Approach strengths and suggestions. Maintain confidentiality within feedback group and with instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What in the design will help students to maximize time on task?</td>
<td>Established norms, and expectations. Clear instructions to reduce confusion and distraction. Clear assignment guidelines to prepare students for the writing task.</td>
<td>Instructions for engaging in peer feedback process. Assignment guidelines and rubric.</td>
<td>Reduce confusion. Increase confidence in completing task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What in the design will create a safe space for communication &amp; collaboration?</td>
<td>Established norms and expectations. Training and modeling reflective listening and effective feedback.</td>
<td>Instruction and training in how to use reflective listening and how to give effective feedback. Survey questions.</td>
<td>Yield higher quality group work and peer feedback. Improve affective functioning. Increase transparency and openness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What error-management strategies will support quality assurance?</td>
<td>3-4 peer editors per team. Peers switch roles to provide 2-3 assessments for each outline. Written feedback is orally explained and discussed. Feedback training. Instructor models feedback process. Scaffolding/multiple peer feedback experiences. Student who receives feedback uses judgment in deciding what feedback to use.</td>
<td>Instructions on peer feedback process and criteria. Rubric. Written and oral feedback training. Survey questions to assess perceived benefits and disadvantages of peer feedback.</td>
<td>Reduce risk of receiving poor advice from a single peer editor. Add clarity and depth to peer feedback. Improve transferable social, communication and diagnostic problem engagement skills for other contexts—including family, job, recreational activities, and in other learning environments. Provide an intermediate check of performance. Yield benefits from reviewing other student examples or approaches.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D
(Researcher’s survey online at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/peerfeedback)

Student Assessment of Speech Outline Peer Feedback

The following statements concern your assessment of the peer feedback process for the persuasive speech outline preparation. Your responses are anonymous. That is, your name will not be associated with the findings, and your course grade will not be influenced by how you respond. The survey should take between ten and fifteen minutes to complete. Please be open and honest. Thank you for your time.

Directions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the first fifteen statements below by marking whether you

(1) STRONGLY DISAGREE, (2) DISAGREE, (3) NEUTRAL, (4) AGREE, OR (5) STRONGLY AGREE.

There are no right or wrong answers. Please work quickly and record your first impressions. The last three survey items (#16 through #18) ask for your candid open responses.

1. I was trained by the instructor on how to give constructive peer feedback.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

2. Training on characteristics of effective feedback made it easier for me to give useful peer feedback.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

3. The teacher modeled effective feedback throughout the quarter.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

4. Having the instructor model effective feedback improved my ability to provide effective peer feedback.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

5. It is easy to ask the instructor for help.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

6. Participating in a group peer feedback discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

7. It is difficult to ask my peers for help.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
8. The peer outline review questions provided by the instructor made it easier for me to give useful peer feedback.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

9. I came prepared with outline drafts completed based on assigned reading and handouts (text, persuasive speech assignment, and sample outline).

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

10. I feel peer feedback increased my speech anxiety.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

11. Peer feedback gave me confidence to deliver a persuasive speech.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

12. Receiving written peer feedback made it easier to improve my outline.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

13. Receiving oral peer feedback made it easier to improve my outline.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

14. Assessing each other taught me to look critically at my own outline.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

15. I have participated in similar peer feedback processes in other classes.

Circle one choice  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

16. Describe how you will change your speech outline as a result of peer feedback, if at all.

17. What did you like most about peer feedback? Why?

18. How can the instructor improve the peer feedback process?