Response 2.0: Commentary on Student Writing for the New Millennium

Jeff Sommers

West Chester University

ABSTRACT

The term Response 2.0 *signifies a change from the "normal" means of commenting on student writing, i.e., writing comments on student drafts, through the use of recorded voice responses in multiple modes. Haswell, citing du Gay's theory of the circuit of culture, argued that response to student writing is a cultural discourse activity with five activity nodes— production, representation, regulation, consumption, and identity—each of which presents a challenge to the instructor trying to respond to student writing. Drawing upon multiple research studies dating back to the 1980s, this essay makes the case that Response 2.0 effectively addresses these major challenges in ways that written response is less likely to do. As Response 2.0 allows instructors to manage the challenges of production, representation, and regulation, it also addresses the issues of student consumption and identity, or resistance. The essay concludes that Response 2.0 is ready to become a mainstream strategy in writing instruction.*

In this essay, I plan to employ the term *Response 2.0* to signify a change from the "normal" means of commenting on student writing. Similar to the analogous term *Web 2.0,* which does not refer to a revision of the World Wide Web, instead describing the changes that have occurred over time in the ways that the web is used, Response 2.0 is not really a revision of the "norm," i.e. written commentary on student writing. Rather, Response 2.0 reflects an evolution in the ways that instructors respond to student writing, primarily by using recorded voice responses that employ a variety of technologies. These technologies range from using word-processing software or course management systems to insert voice comments in electronic texts and recording MP3 files to employing screen-capture plus audio recording software such as TechSmithJing® or TechSmithCamtasia® to create multi-modal responses and creating digital video recordings of the instructor discussing a student text. My primary goal is to argue that Response 2.0 effectively addresses many of the major challenges of responding to writing, often doing so in ways that written commentary is far less likely to do. Because Response 2.0 can assist writing instructors in meeting these challenges, students respond very positively to such commentary. This article draws upon research over the past four decades conducted by researchers both in the United States and the United Kingdom, studies that have consistently demonstrated the overwhelmingly favorable view of Response 2.0 approaches reported by student writers. A secondary goal is to offer an explanation for why Response 2.0 is received so positively by students. Ultimately, I hope that readers will seriously consider adopting Response 2.0 methodology or adapting it to their own current practice.

Decades of research, theorizing, and practice have made clear what all faculty who assign writing in their classes know through daily experience: responding to student writing is complex and challenging. In a recent article,

Haswell (2006) observed, "All across campus students write papers, and they all expect a reaction beyond a grade or a number. The question is how can teachers best produce it" (p. 10). But, he argued, before that question can be addressed, a more pressing one needed to be examined: "Why is instructional response so complicated, so problematic?" (p. 2) and continued, "I want to look at instructional response to writing as an activity supported by and supporting normal discourse practices, an activity no different and no less complex than recommending a book or answering an e-mail" (p. 3). Haswell viewed teacher response to student writing as a "cultural discourse activity" (p. 1), leading him to turn to du Gay's (1997) theory of the "circuit of culture." Du Gay identified five "activity nodes…'through which any analysis of a cultural text or artifact must pass if it is to be adequately studied'" (p. 3). Haswell's thesis was that du Gay's cultural activity nodes could represent challenges to effective response when viewed as cultural discourse activity, and his intent was that teachers could become more efficient responders by understanding the challenges better. Here is a brief overview of the five challenges Haswell analyzed:

- **Production** is the process of creating the responses;
- **Representation** is the role assumed by the responding instructor;
- **Regulation** is the instructor's enforcement of criteria and rules;
- **Consumption** is the manner in which students receive the response; and
- **Identity** is the resistant role often played by the student recipients of the response.

Haswell (2006) noted that teachers have long sought efficiencies or "shortcuts" that might make responding more manageable, compiling a list of these shortcuts and including the date of the earliest citation he could find for each in the "post-WWII literature" (p. 11). Seventh in the list was "Record comments on audiotape (1958)." Although Haswell cited well over 140 sources that focused on responding to student writing, his essay did not offer a single reference to audio-recorded commentary, despite its 50-year history. My own experience,

as a practitioner of audio-recorded commentary since the late 1970s, is that, even today, audio-recorded commentary continues to fly beneath the radar of most writing teachers. Indeed, justifying her decision to focus on written commentary, Scrocco (2012) noted, "Although some have argued that oral response represents one way to offer students clearer and more readily implemented advice on their writing, the majority of composition instructors still use written response as their primary method of providing feedback" (p. 290, n. 2). Haswell made the same choice to focus on the dominant model of teacher response: marginal and/or end comments written or typed or inserted on a computer.

Why is the published literature on audio-recorded response overlooked? One reason, perhaps, is because much of it has been descriptive or analytical rather than persuasive. In this essay, as I have indicated, I plan to be persuasive by using the framework employed by Haswell (2006) to show how Response 2.0 may well be better suited than written commentary to meet the challenges of response. The research demonstrates a widespread pattern that emphasizes the clarity, depth, versatility, and personal touch of Response 2.0. These features of Response 2.0 can effectively address the major challenges presented to teachers who wish to comment on their students' writing (*regulation, production, representation*), thus leading to more welcome kinds of student reactions (*consumption*), most notably in reduced resistance (*identity*).

Production: "The Bane of Response"

There can be no doubt that it requires a great amount of time for teachers to respond to their students' writing, but I hope to demonstrate that the time and effort devoted to producing response is ameliorated by Response 2.0. Haswell (2006), following a long line of researchers and practitioners, underscored the tremendous time investment required of teachers writing comments on their students' papers. Haswell referred to findings that established the time spent on commenting per

page to have been 20 minutes per student paper on average (p. 10). Lee (2009) offered another historical review of studies of time spent over a full course term in responding to student writing, citing 231 hours, 281 hours, and 312 hours (p. 167). What are the effects of such a time commitment? Lee found that "writing faculty workload seems to affect the length and … the rhetorical content and pedagogical direction of faculty comments" (pp. 172-172). No wonder Haswell labeled the production of comments "the bane of response" (p. 10). Connors and Lunsford (1993) concluded that "teachers simply have too many students and too many papers to have time to look for the 'big picture' of any one student's development" (p. 213). Although teachers, not surprisingly, compensate for what has come to be called the "paper load" and its attendant time commitment by seeking shortcuts, Haswell warned that "a major hazard of production shortcuts is that they are constructed almost solely for the teacher and usually judged solely by the teacher" (p.19).

However, Response 2.0 can effectively address these issues of production time. Warnock (2008) calculated that his screen capture response required 30% less time than his previous written approach to commentary per student paper, allowing him to comment on six papers per hour compared to four per hour with written comments. This claim, however, has been countered in the literature by Dagen et al. (2008) who found that audio-recorded response was not a "time saver and in many instances actually took more time to grade each paper" (p.163). Dunne and Rodway-Dyer (2009, p. 177) reported that the audio-recorded responses they analyzed ranged in length from 9:04 to 18:31 minutes, averaging 12:18 minutes, so that adding

the preparation time to the process would surely prevent commenting at Warnock's rate of six papers per hour.

Dagen et al. (2008) do not report on the length of the audio comments they analyzed, but if their instructors devoted as much time to each response as Dunne and Rodway-Dyer's (2009) instructors, then clearly they would not be saving time. However, there is no need to record responses of such length. My own audio-visual recorded responses are limited by the technology I use (Jing.com videos) to no more than five minutes per commentary. Recently, I asked first-year composition students to complete anonymously a seven-question survey, which they completed two days after receiving their first recorded commentaries from me. Students (N=97) were asked this question: "Compared to written comments on my writing that I have received in the past, the video provided: the same amount of comments, more comments, fewer comments." The results indicated that the students did not feel they had been shortchanged by five minutes of response (see Table 1).

The survey results suggested that students were perceptive enough to recognize how much response they were receiving. One wrote, "You could go into detail more in your comments than you could have written on the paper because there wouldn't have been enough space," and another reported, "… the video comments… are very helpful and eliminate all of the writing you would have to do. Five minutes of speaking would consist of an awful lot of writing."

Let me offer an example from an analysis of my own recordings to substantiate these student observations. In one response, I wanted to emphasize the need for evidence to support the student's claims. During the course of my

Table 1
Responses to Survey Question: "Compared to Written Comments, Video Comments Provided…

Response Options	Number of Times Chosen	Responses by % (N=97)
…the same amount of comments as written"	19	19.6
…fewer comments than written"	2	2.1
…more comments than written"	76	78.4

response, I mentioned the need for evidence five times, praising one excellent example and pointing out opportunities to provide more detail. These five occasions occupied 1:24 minutes of recorded time, roughly 175 words in total. In a second paper, the same student presented his research findings, using statistics to make his point. I praised his use of sub-headings (12 seconds), his statement of his major findings in the opening paragraph (13 seconds), and his use of raw numbers to accompany percentages in a table (20 seconds). Those spoken comments required roughly 25 words, 27 words, and 42 words, respectively, to explain my praise. The examples I have provided, eight comments in two papers, totaled 269 words. Could a teacher formulate those comments and type them in the same 2:09 minutes it took me to formulate and speak them? I do not believe so. And that is how Response 2.0 can address the "bane of response": time of production.

All of the word counts in this essay are premised on transcriptions made of recorded commentary in a previous study (Sommers, 1989) when I found that I could produce the equivalent of one full-page of double-spaced commentary (250 words) by speaking for 90-120 seconds. This is a conservative estimate compared to the pace Warnock (2008, p. 208) reported when his 1181-word commentary required 6:10 minutes; at that pace, he would produce one full-page of double-spaced commentary in 78 seconds. However the math is performed, there can be little question that spoken commentary, compared to as written commentary, can produce more response in less time.

Here is another comparison, drawn from the oft-cited work of Smith (1997) who reproduced a complete 112-word end comment written by an instructor. Smith offered this critique of the commentary:

> Of course, this comment could also be improved. The teacher could strengthen the positive evaluation of development (second sentence) and balance the positive and negative portions of the comment by adding a reader response genre at the end of the first paragraph to explain the reasons a particular

example is persuasive. The teacher could also use a complete sentence to express the positive evaluation of style at the end of the comment, thus giving it more weight and reducing the impression of hastiness created by the fragment. (p. 266)

Smith's sample end comment required 1:34 minutes for me to type. I then prepared an audio-visual response, reading the entire end comment as written while also attempting to improve it along the lines that Smith had recommended by adding more commentary. At the same time, I tried to restrict myself to the same 1:34 minutes that it had taken me to type the original response. Although I ran over slightly by nine seconds, in 1:43 minutes I presented a commentary of 214 words and discussed all three of Smith's suggestions. (Here is the link to my video: http://www.screencast.com/t/UKSJMyzmCGrp)

One staff member using audio recorded response for the first time reported to Rotheram (2009b): "A comment delivered in words may be quicker to prepare than a written comment and much more can be said. So bearing this in mind, it may become a favourite method among lots of staff" (p. 3). In a report on two later research studies, Rotheram (2009a) addressed the question of how long it might take to produce an audio response:

> So the indications are that it is possible, *in some circumstances*, to use digital audio to save time and not compromise on the amount and quality of feedback to students. The most favourable circumstances would appear to be:
> •The assessor is comfortable with the technology.
> •The assessor writes or types slowly but records their [sic] speech quickly.
> •A substantial amount of feedback is given.
> •A quick and easy method of delivering the audio file to the student is available. (p. 10, emphasis in original)

Rotheram's (2009a) advice seemed sound. The point to take is that the producer of the comments is in control and can devote no more

time to audio response than previously devoted to written commentary or can reduce the time investment without sacrificing the payoff for the effort. Additionally, because Response 2.0 can be a more productive approach to commenting on student writing, it can also encourage less-harried teachers to represent themselves in more constructive ways.

Representation: The Role(s) of the Teacher-Responder

Haswell (2006) argued that "…the role of the responding teacher and the setting of the act of response combine to represent the teacher-responder in a way that may have complicated and powerful effects on students…" (pp. 14-15). He continued with an extended discussion of the various roles teachers might play, the "dramatis personae of teacherly roles" (p. 16), providing a list of twelve such roles ranging from "distanced aesthetician or rhetorician" or "demanding coach," to "sharp-eyed editor" or "real reader" (p 15). He cautioned that "choosing and maintaining these roles adds to the stressful job of responding to students' writing" (p. 16) and, while he rejected the notion that the "stressful job" had become impossible, he expressed concern that the challenge had become so great that teachers had to battle the tendency to give up in discouragement.

But teachers cannot afford to give up. When Scrocco (2012) analyzed student response to an instructor's written commentary, she reported that one student found her teacher's written remarks most helpful when they "mimic oral dialogue" (p. 283) and that the students indicated that they were eager to engage their teacher in a discussion of their writing and her response. Scrocco concluded her study with the admonition that "if this teacher aspires to engage her students in conversation about their writing, she *should be offering them as much conversational feedback as she can*" (p. 288, emphasis added).

I am not going to claim that Response 2.0 removes the challenge of effective representation, but I will assert that it facilitates meeting the challenge of representation successfully because students perceive Response 2.0 as part of a

personal conversation with their teachers, which, as I show later, can have a salutary effect on students' consumption of that response. As far back as 1989, I argued that recorded comments, compared to written response, could be "more individualized" (p. 52) and could move response toward more productive collaboration with students (p. 72). More recently, I have been attempting to find out what my students' opinions are. When I asked some of them (N=97) to identify the major difference between written commentary and audio-visual comments, the fourth most frequently cited difference (after more explanation, greater depth, and greater clarity) was that the students found it more "personal." That the comments were "more personal" was also the fourth most frequent answer given in response to the question "What did you like most about video comments?" (following greater depth, clarity, and explanation again). Merry and Orsmond (2008) also determined that students' satisfaction with recorded commentary was due in part to its being "more personal."

What do students mean by "more personal?" Ice et al. (2007) reported on observations made by a graduate student in their study, who had taught writing online. The student was "fascinated" (p. 12) by the audio comments he had received and decided to transcribe them. He concluded:

> I know you were saying the same things in your [audio files] and in what I transcribed, but the difference was you were saying them. When I looked at the transcription there was no stress placed on any of the words or sentences. Then I tried putting the stress there by adding in caps or exclamation marks and I wondered if I would have thought that you might have been yelling or something if I would have read it that way. What I figured out was that there is really no way that you could have gotten the same info across the same way. This all made me think about the way my students have perceived me in courses when I write to them with comments. It's not the same, is it? No, it's really not. We lose so much in the

written word sometimes and I think maybe we haven't thought about that enough in our online teaching. (p. 12)

Ice et al. (2007) concluded that they judged "the role audio feedback played in developing this type of interpersonal relationship with students in our asynchronous courses to be a compelling enough reason for its continued use even if no other positive factors had been discovered" (pp. 18-19).

Examining student observations in a range of studies can help to define what they mean by "personal" in how they characterize the teacher's self-representation. In my survey, one student described her preference for video vs. written commentary by describing it as similar to "having a conversation with you." Ice et al. (2007) reported that one student's response said the teacher's recorded commentary "made me feel like you really cared about what was going on. That's a warm fuzzy I haven't gotten with online classes before" (p. 16). Kates (1998), who studied the preferences of commuter students at a two-year campus, quoted another student with a similar reaction to recorded commentary, asserting that it "made me feel more like a person that was recognized rather than a student in a classroom–it gave a less intimidating feeling about the whole writing process" (p. 21). Sipple (2007a) reported that one student remarked, "I would be so excited to put that CD in once I got to my van to go home. I couldn't wait. It made me feel like I was being tutored one-on-one and I received some great advice" (p. 24). Such student comments echo findings by Dagen et al. (2008) in their research. They categorized the topics covered by audio-recorded commentary, identifying one category as "positive affirmation/rapport building" (p.159), and they concluded that audio commentary included twice as many of these comments as written commentary (p. 160).

One of my own graduate students recently wrote a note about the video commentary I had supplied during her first graduate seminar, and sounded themes similar to the ones cited above:

I think that this audio response is just really ethically and responsively appealing to me. They really and truly provide a way for me to feel like an individual in a classroom setting. I know exactly what you think, I feel like--you know when you go to a doctor's office who has overscheduled him/herself and you feel like they are rushing you out of the patient examination room? Then when you've found a great doctor, you feel like they really really take their time with you even though you know that they have other patients waiting? That is sort of how I feel upon receiving these comments. I feel like I've received the appropriate amount of attention, and this makes me want to do the work for you since you've done it for me. If that makes sense. It creates a realm of respect.

What all of these commentaries suggest is that Response 2.0 affects teacher-student relationships in ways not as likely to occur in written feedback because of the challenges Haswell (2006) has identified in production, and representation. Olson (1982) was accurate, I think, when he described instructors' use of tone in audio-recorded response as "pseudotutorial." He argued that students will respond to the instructor's *ethos*, although he does not use that term, and they will recognize that the instructor cares about them as writers rather than caring only about the written product. He discussed how the vocal response can foster a more rewarding relationship between teacher and student, in great part because "the recorded response enables the teacher to be more supportive and encouraging" (p. 123). Olson's analysis has been borne out by studies that have followed.

For instance, Sipple (2007a) reported that "…the majority of the students interviewed believed audio feedback was more individualized and therefore required a greater commitment to them on the part of the instructor" (p. 26), and in fact, "Eight out of ten interview subjects in the study reported that they believed audio commentary helped to create a stronger student/professor bond, whereas handwritten commentary sometimes damaged that perceived bond" (p. 26). One interviewee told Sipple, "…[audio comments] made me feel like I had a much more personal and human relationship with

my professor" (p. 28). In a different study, Sipple (2000b) asked students to respond to the statement "Audio comments improved my bond with my professor" by selecting responses from a Likert Scale (1.0=strongly disagree; 2.0=disagree; 3.0=no opinion; 4.0=agree; 5.0=strongly agree). The response mean registered 4.25 (n=57).

Other researchers have come to similar conclusions about the effects of Response 2.0 on the relationship of teacher and students. Dagen et al. (2008) wrote "from an instructional perspective, audio may provide an opportunity to establish more meaningful relationships with students…" (p. 163), and Rotheram (2009a) quoted a participating teacher who said that "the feedback became almost an online tutorial" (p. 12). Other teachers have voiced the same perception of audio commentary. Talbert (2011) wrote:

> Several students have commented that they strongly prefer video feedback over any other kind of grading. It's much closer to the true meaning of 'assessment,' which if you look at the root word for that term, it means 'to sit down alongside.' Assessment is supposed to be about the instructor and the student sitting down together and discussing the student's work in its totality. That's a humane and positive vision of student assessment that I would like my own grading to emulate.

In Dixon's (2010) discussion of audio commentary, he found that teachers were affected by the methodology, as well as students:

> Staff commented on both the medium– 'interesting and exciting, a richer process,' 'it's more personal, and less ambiguous,' and 'greater depth, as it's more personal and formative'—as well as reflecting on the nature of feedback itself and, indeed, their own professional practice—'it changes [the] nature and quality of feedback,' 'it has profoundly reframed the way I give feedback,' and 'it changes the student/tutor dynamic' (p. 33).

The representation challenges described by Haswell (2006) do not disappear in Response 2.0, but they are mitigated by the advantages provided by the media in use. Response 2.0 readily allows teachers to represent themselves as the familiar figure with whom the students have interacted in the classroom through personal references to events in the classroom, previous conversations, even citations of students' own previous work, thus enhancing the likelihood of the students' being willing to listen to the responses with an open mind. Elsewhere, I termed such responses *retrospective comments* (Sommers, 2012) and expatiated at some length about how they contribute to establishing closer bonds between faculty and students.

Comments tied to the ongoing relationship between the teacher and the student also manifest in Response 2.0 not just as retrospective comments, but also as *synchronous comments* that emphasize the teacher's experiences in reading the student text and as *anticipatory comments* that look ahead to future activities in the writing class (see also Sommers, 2002). I attempted to demonstrate that such comments were much more likely to occur in voice commentary than in written commentary, in part, I believe, because of the relative easing of production challenges (see Sommers, 2012). Additionally, because of the advantages of representation through Response 2.0, the challenges presented by regulation are also mitigated, as I show in the next section.

Regulation: "Enforcing" Criteria and Rules

Haswell (2006) described the activity node of regulation as "the epicenter of instructional response to writing," observing that: "Response is regulative because it hopes to move novices and their writing toward some more mature psychological, professional, social, or cultural ends" (p. 4). What makes response regulative, he continued, is that it relies upon how teachers present criteria, rules of genre and mode, disciplinary styles, and standards as set by social groups or discourse communities. Because there are so many options for regulation, Haswell contended, the task of

response becomes immensely complicated, an argument I find convincing.

But Ice et al. (2007) reported as one of their major findings that, according to student feedback, "Audio feedback was perceived to be more effective than text-based feedback for conveying nuance…" (p. 3). "Nuance," I would argue, is a move away from overt regulation. As we have seen, Response 2.0 allows instructors to make more efficient use of their responding time and prompts them to represent themselves in a personal way that can strengthen the working bond with their student writers. In the process of being more efficient and more personal, instructors can cope with the welter of options described by Haswell (2006) because Response 2.0 encourages them to make more nuanced choices in order to present their selected options more effectively.

Let me be clearer about that point. Students on both sides of the Atlantic report that Response 2.0 provided them with response of greater depth and more clarity than written commentary because it offered more explanation. Three decades ago, Olson (1982) argued for the value of recorded comments by focusing on the importance of explaining: "Ideally, the teacher's response to a student's paper should go beyond mere evaluation; it should be an extension of classroom instruction, in that the pupil is made to see *how* and *why* certain passages are vague, unconvincing, or ungrammatical..." (p. 122, emphasis in original). Indeed, the questions of how and why seem to be among the most valuable aspects of Response 2.0, according to students in a number of studies.

In my 2011 survey, one student noted, "Video comments explain more than written comments. When there's written comments there are no explanations." Rotheram's (2009a) UK research concluded that students preferred audio response, quoting student remarks that audio commentary is "a lot easier for me to understand as it's being explained in more detail" (p. 11) and that audio is better than written comments because "You get more info" (p. 11). Still (2006), focusing on technical writing students, quoted a student comment that "I like how you get so detailed when grading our

papers…I really like the voice comments because … I feel that hearing it gets the message across better." (p. 465). Sipple (2007b) pointed out in her surveys of 57 students that their response to the prompt "Audio comments are more understandable than written comments" was 4.35 on a Likert scale where 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree.

Dunne and Rodway-Dyer (2009), Dagen et al. (2008), Dixon (2007), and Merry and Orsmond (2007) offered similar themed student response in their research. Dixon's students said that audio-recorded commentary was "easier to interpret" and was "much more specific and easier to understand" than written comments (p. 35), and Merry and Orsmond (2008) cited one student comment that "hearing them [his instructors] speaking you could see where their thinking processes were. You could hear the thinking processes" (Results section, para. 2).

But all of this research focused on audio-recorded commentary. More recently, researchers have turned to audio-visual response, finding similar themes in students' reported reactions to their teachers' commentary. Moore and Filling (2012), in the pages of *JCLL*, concluded that students preferred AV feedback because it "provided more information and was clearer than written comments they had received from instructors" (p. 10), specifying that "many students noted that the video feedback gave them greater clarity about what the instructor was trying to communicate" (p. 11). In my own survey, to the question "What is the major difference between video comments and written comments on your writing, based on your experience?" almost all of the students (N=97) chose to identify only a single quality. Their top three responses were:

•Video comments offered greater depth: 27 (27.6%): "In the video comments you can get more detail because it's not confined to the margin of the page."
•Video comments were clearer to understand: 23 (23.5%): "The video comments were easier to follow and more useful. I can listen to your comments as I

am revising."

•Video comments offered more explanations: 18 (18.4%). All 18 of these responses used some form of the verb *explain* or the noun *explanation.* For example, "Video is a clearer explanation" and "…the comments get explained as to why something should be changed or why something's good."

The next question in my survey asked students "What did you like most about video comments?" Fully one-third (32) of these responses, the most popular answer, again referred to increased clarity and depth of explanation compared to written comments.

An illustration of what the students were appreciating can be found in Moore and Filling's (2012) analysis of the teachers' work in their study. They concluded that both instructors spent a majority of their time "elaborating a particular suggestion or giving examples about how to address suggestions or make corrections" (p. 8). For example, Moore and Filling describe how one teacher spent 11 seconds recording two suggestions to the student-writer about her paper's thesis and focus and then devoted 4:42 minutes to "elaborating on what she meant and giving examples for how … [the student] might address the suggestions" (p. 8).

How then does Response 2.0 address Haswell's (2006) concern with regulation? The opportunity to dig deeper into a response by explaining how and why—as illustrated by Moore and Filling's (2012) instructor—can encourage teachers to sacrifice breadth for depth in their response because creating a response in greater depth is so much easier through recording than writing comments. Using the formula I cited earlier, Moore and Filling's instructor devoted roughly 23 words to her suggestion offered to the student and then approximately 600 words to explaining how and why, all in fewer than five minutes of response. Written comments tend to be much briefer. Connors and Lunsford (1993) reported that only 5% of the thousands of teacher responses they analyzed exceeded 100 words—because

they were examining written commentary.

My point is that if teachers using Response 2.0 devoted no more time to recording their observations than their colleagues spent writing responses, they could take advantage of the medium by being more expansive. Rather than overloading students with an increased volume of short regulative responses that attempt to enforce criteria, rules of genre and mode, disciplinary styles, and standards, instructors can instead explain the how's and why's of revising to meet specific criteria or styles in greater depth and with greater clarity.

Consumption and Identity: How Students Receive the Messages

To this point, I have been focusing my argument on how teachers might better meet the challenges of production, representation, and regulation in responding to student writing. I now turn to the students themselves. As Haswell (2006) observed, teachers need to be cognizant of how production "shortcuts" impact students. He was concerned that students might not appreciate the short cuts that writing faculty take in order to lessen the burden of producing so many commentaries. So how do the students receive Response 2.0 comments? Haswell addressed the issue of how students received teacher response in his discussion of the activity node of consumption, noting that "…overall, they [students] don't consume teacher response very well" and continued, "In terms of teacher response, consumption asks some hard questions. Is the communication channel between teacher and student viable?" (p. 8). Haswell was concerned with the misunderstandings often experienced by students as they consume written response and argued that, "To make matters worse, the problems lie not so much with students or with teachers but with the interaction between them" (p. 8).

To illustrate his concerns, Haswell (2006) related a story about a persistent misunderstanding between a teacher who kept marking the student's draft with the word "cliché" in the margins, only to discover that the student was actually trying to provide more clichés in subsequent drafts, operating under the impression that the instructor's notations indicated approval. I believe the problem here

was caused in part by the amount of labor required to produce written comments, leading to an ineffective shortcut—a one-word response. Here is a comparable situation to the "cliché story" in my own recorded commentary: I wanted to show a student that she had used the preposition "like" when the subordinate conjunction "as if" was needed. I spent 14 seconds, approximately 29 words, explaining that difference, including a page citation to the course handbook. Had Haswell's professor devoted 29 words to explaining his concerns about the use of clichés, perhaps the misunderstanding could have been avoided. Of course, it would have required more than 14 seconds to write the explanation, however.

But an even greater issue in the literature of response—and the lore that teachers pass along to one another—is whether students read written comments at all. In fact, the greatest challenge of consumption as an activity node is to entice the students to attend to the comments. Response 2.0 can accomplish that. In my survey of first-year composition students, when I asked students two days after they had received my video comments about their consumption of my response, the results indicated that 98% of the students had already watched my video comments, with a great majority having done so multiple times (see Table 2). Rotheram (2009b) quoted one student who explained that the voice commentary "shows that you actually spent time looking at my work in detail" (p. 2), a theme echoed in the results of my classroom survey by students who wrote, "I could tell you are really interested in helping us," and "I liked how personal it was. It made me feel like you actually cared about the paper and weren't just brushing it off without acknowledging who even

wrote it." And this blunt comment: "It showed me that he really read the paper." It seems important to recognize that some students may ignore teacher comments that do not convey this sense of having read the students' papers closely.

My survey results were consistent with those reported in other studies. Dunne and Rodway-Dyer (2009) surveyed 52 students and concluded that, "The majority of students listened at least once or twice to their feedback, most students listened to it twice and some up to four or five times" (p. 176). In another small study (15 students), more than 70% noted that pausing or rewinding the comments was an advantage of the recorded medium (Merry & Orsmond, 2008).

Individual students have also commented on their proclivity to listen to the audio response multiple times. One of Rotheram's (2009b) students wrote, "'I don't think I read all my feedback from the previous assignment, but I did listen to all of your audio file, twice–possibly just because it is a novelty, but I don't think so. It does not take too long at all to listen to, and I think it is nice to hear positive things said about your work and also easier to take criticism that way. There is also never the problem of illegibility!" (p. 3). Ice et al. (2007) quoted a student's observations about listening to recorded comments:

> I just finished answering some questions about the time it took to listen to comments or read comments. My answer was that it took longer. However, I wanted to clarify that a little. It took longer because I replayed the comments a couple of times so I could really see what was being said as it related to my work and get more out of it. I don't do this

Table 2
Responses to Survey Question: "I Have Watched the Video Comments on My First Paper…

Response Options	Number of Times Chosen	Responses by % (N=97)
…0 times"	2	2.1
…1 time"	20	20.6
…more than 1 time"	75	77.3

when the comments are written because I don't think they are as good. (p. 3)

In response to Talbert's (2011) online essay about digital grading, Courtneyf (2001) noted that:

One of my students brought up an interesting point that is pro digital grading. His favorite aspect of the Jing recording was that he was able to listen to my comments as many times as he wanted, thus enabling him to take full advantage of them. If I had made these comments to him orally during my office hours, he would have surely forgotten the majority of them by the time he sat down to work on the paper revisions.

Why do the students return to the recorded commentary? Dagen et al. (2008) surveyed students about what they desired in the way of response, reporting that "… the findings indicate [that] more attention was … given to the category students value most: Assignment Content/Subject matter" (p. 163). Still (2006) asked students to compare the relative effectiveness of spoken commentary vs. written commentary when it came to various aspects of their writing. He concluded that "students indicated that voice only feedback was more successful than written only feedback in discussing language style, clarity, purpose, tone, organization, and total document issues" (p. 465). Written only comments, Still continued, were preferred only for commentary on grammar and spelling.

But the full story is more complicated. One student clarified why it was necessary to listen to the recorded commentary multiple times: "I'd listen to it and write my own comments and then I'd go back through it a second time looking at the notes I had written for each paragraph… and I'd thought of things in my head that I could put in" (Merry & Orsmond, 2008, Results section, para. 5). I think most teachers would rejoice to hear this student's strategy for assimilating their commentary. However, the need to access the commentary multiple times has also been offered as a criticism of recorded comments. Dagen et al.

(2008) reported that their respondents claimed "the main disadvantage" of recorded response was the "difficulty in finding the point in the assignment to which the feedback related" (p. 176). I gathered similar results in my survey when I asked my students "What did you like least about video comments?" More than 18% responded that having to listen to the recording multiple times was a drawback as one student wrote, "I had to write down the comments you were giving, which was more work."

I do not believe that such critiques, however, are necessarily negative marks against Response 2.0. The difficulty, I would argue, may not reside in the methodology of response but in the students' understanding of how to make use of it. Rotheram (2009a) posed a question about student complaints: "How seriously should we take student reservations about it being harder to skim an audio recording than a piece of text? Many lecturers complain that students pay little attention to written feedback. Perhaps, therefore, it may be seen as an *advantage* that students find it harder to skim audio feedback!" (p.11). Merry and Orsmond's (2008) student had already discovered the necessity for note-taking while playing the recorded response, while my student found such note-taking to be a burden. So it seems clear that students using Response 2.0 need to be prepared by their teachers to use the commentary efficiently. Toward that end, I have begun to distribute a page of advice to my students along with the first set of recorded comments, and they seem gradually to get used to the note-taking (see Appendix A). Frankly, I would be thrilled to learn that all of my students "had to write down the comments." Ideally, all the students would conclude their consumption activity by having an annotated hard copy of their drafts in their own handwriting.

But the possible drawback of accessing the response multiple times seemed not to have been overwhelming to my students. In fact, while 18% of my students objected to having to watch my response video more than once, twice as many students (36.7%) responded that they could provide "No answer" to the question about what they liked least about the video response. And when I asked the students whether they would choose written comments or video comments on

their subsequent papers, 90.8% chose video (and 3% chose both video and written commentary). In actuality, not one student in those classes ever requested written comments during the rest of the term. Apparently, while some students might point to the necessity of consuming the recorded response multiple times as a drawback, they evidently did not find it to be a significant enough issue to sour them on the methodology.

But consuming the teachers' comments also includes the possibility of resisting them. Haswell (2006) wrote, "Identity is the representation one constructs of oneself in part out of the representation others make of oneself" (p. 20). He traced how identity can lead students to resist teachers' comments because, as he explained, "resistance inheres in response to writing…Students are reluctant to change their rhetorically inept ways because their old ways have stood them academically in sufficient stead… and because they don't like the image of themselves as inepts" (p. 17). Does Response 2.0 incur student resistance? Of course, to some extent it does, as we have seen in concerns registered about having to listen multiple times, for example, but Response 2.0 appears poised to invite students' approval rather than their resistance primarily because they view it as being "different" from their past experiences with written response. The differences are that Response 2.0 affords greater opportunities for teachers to offer positive feedback, convey their concerns for student improvement more forcefully, and, in the case of video commentary, offer both a visual and auditory response. These differences make a difference in the degree of student resistance.

Students frequently expressed a preference for Response 2.0 approaches because of the personal quality of the methodology. Rotheram (2009b) reported that one student wrote, "I rather liked having you talk me through the feedback like this. It's nicer than face-to-face somehow, as I always feel I have to react and talk when I'm face-to-face, so I found I concentrated on the comments better" (p. 1). Another of his students commented, "The personal touch is always welcome and it is almost as good as a face-to-face feedback

meeting. In fact, if I had received a low mark I think I would have preferred this method to a face-to-face meeting as it would 'save face' whilst still getting personalised feedback." Mellen (Mellen & Sommers, 2003) also reported that she appreciated the distance created by the recordings as compared to a face-to-face conference where criticism would have potentially deflated her confidence or embarrassed her (p. 34).

These remarks echoed findings by Ice et al. (2007) that students felt "audio feedback was associated with the perception that the instructor cared more about the student" (p. 3). Two of the students in Still's (2006) study also discussed their affective responses to audio commentary: "I feel that hearing it gets the message across better. You can feel the voice rather than just reading it" and "There are things like voice inflection that help me have hope when I write something bad. On one assignment it helped to hear that you had faith in me when I did not; you can't get that with the written word" (p. 465). Mellen observed (Mellen & Sommers, 2003), in perhaps the most extensive student commentary on affective reaction to recorded commentary:

> When listening to the tapes, I get a sense of being the professor's equal… on the tapes he spoke to me as if to a fellow writer. That can be an automatic ego boost–or at least somewhat of a confidence builder–for a student listening to the tapes. Along with this, the professor communicated in a more personal way on the tapes than he did in class. I would assume this is a natural outcome of being able to speak so freely to one person concerning her work, unlike in a classroom setting. (p. 35)

Because students like Mellen may be more likely to perceive their instructor to be interested in their progress, they may also recognize that the teacher is not representing them as an "inept" and is, in fact, contextualizing their work over the course of a term. Although Connors and Lunsford (1993, p. 213) cautioned that teachers simply lacked

the time to "look for the 'big picture'" in written response, some students disagree, such as these two respondents to my class survey: "When people can write all over your paper they start fixing little mistakes and rephrasing. Video comments don't do that. Video comments look at the big picture." and "I liked how you went through and spoke while also looking at the big picture."

Here is one example of how Response 2.0 can work to convey a teacher's attitude. I was trying to make a point to the student writer about the need to support his argument with convincing evidence. I drew upon my already-established relationship with the student by saying, in a light-hearted tone, "You seem to be nice guy. Eat an apple every day in class. But do I trust you enough to take your word for it in this paper?" The joke was that the student had frequently brought a shiny green apple to class as a snack, leading to some joking back and forth about apples for teachers. In this comment, which lasted 12 seconds in its full version, I attempted to represent myself as the same person with whom the student had been interacting in class for weeks. In another instance, my commentary was designed to show a student how her use of a concrete example stood out in a story she was relating about a conflict she had had with a high school teacher. I remarked, "I can relate to what you say about yourself as a student in this story because I was also the same kind of perfectionist student, just not as mature as you seem to have been." By making a very human connection between myself as reader and the student as writer, my recording established my concern for the student as a person rather than focusing entirely on the text.

However, the ease with which Response 2.0 fosters such personal commentary, also presents challenges to the audio commentator. Some students reported discomfort with the personal approach: one reported feeling "awkward" while listening, one read the comments as "more harsh/honest," and another noted that s/he could "actually hear your tone of voice so sometimes I take that the wrong way like you're disappointed."

Perhaps the personal quality of the response raises the stakes somewhat for instructors, who need to be cognizant of their vocal tones. The final comment above is important because the student has been honest in articulating feelings of disappointment but has also been reflective enough to acknowledge that such a reaction has been taken in "the wrong way." That indicates, I think, that this student wants to trust the instructor and, equally important, does not want to let him down.

Responding in Response 2.0 methodologies also frees teachers from the spatial confines of a written document, offering the potential of a non-linear approach to response, a difference that drew strong reactions from some students. "What I like most," said one student, "Was how you scrolled through my paper to explain about whatever comments you have made." Another explained, "I like on the video when you show something that is on one page that relates to something else you can easily scroll up and show that." This approach also drew concerns from other students, however: "I didn't like that sometimes you jumped around a lot through the paper." They advised me, "Go through the paper page by page instead of jumping around" and "Go in order of the paragraphs from beginning to end instead of jumping around."

I do not read these requests and critiques as resistance, however, or at least not as rejection. As discussed earlier, processing Response 2.0 requires students to discover new strategies, such as note-taking while listening. The non-linear approach to commentary—because I generally pursued themes of concern rather than methodically trudging from line to line in sequence through the entire paper—may also make greater demands upon students. So the practitioner of Response 2.0 faces the decision of how to organize the commentary and how to prepare the students to engage with the response most effectively. I could, of course, follow these students' advice; there is no requirement that Response 2.0 avoid the spatial orientation of written comments with its series of marginal remarks leading to an end comment situated at the bottom of the final page of a text or in a separate letter. I prefer the alternative organization made available through Response 2.0 but continue to monitor myself and my students lest it become a

stumbling block to communication.

Up to this point I have been addressing a variety of Response 2.0 models without differentiation, but now I want to turn deliberately to the impact of video on response. It is this development, which has grown in popularity over the past 5-6 years, that prompted me to coin the label *Response 2.0*, and the visual aspects added to the audio-recorded voice are striking in terms of the students' response. One student described the major difference between written and video commentary by saying "The video comments are different in a sense that it is more of a visual way to listen to revision ideas." This commentary married the audio to the video, and I [along with other instructors as reported by Moore and Filling, 2012, p. 11] have begun consciously to underscore the visual component of the response by highlighting in various colors the texts I am discussing. Students have noticed the highlighting.

To the survey question, "What's the major difference between video comments and written comments on your writing?" only three students singled out the highlighting aspect, but to the survey question, 'What did you like most about video comments?" the most popular response (32.7% or 32 responses) identified the visual aspect of seeing their writing on the screen. Their comments elaborated on this opinion, stressing that the highlighted passages made it "easier to follow and understand the comments." Another wrote, "I liked that the parts of my paper that you were talking about were highlighted, and I liked being able to look at my paper while I heard you talking." And several students linked their own learning styles to the response as in this comment: "I'm a visual learner and prefer everything visual." In fact, when the survey asked students how to make the video comments more helpful to them, they often emphasized the visual aspects of the response with at least a half dozen variations on the advice to "Try to highlight a little more."

Yet not all students expressed total approval of my video comments, just as some students' preference for written comments have been present in every published survey. It is important to remember that not every student responds the same way to any response method. However, given the overwhelming and consistent preference expressed for Response 2.0 approaches, I am prepared to argue that the kind of resistance described by Haswell (2006) in his consideration of the identity activity node can be effectively reduced by use of Response 2.0 in large part because these approaches reduce the likelihood that the students will feel as they have been ignored or treated as "inept," and because Response 2.0 can also appeal to multiple learning styles.

Conclusions

It is important to be clear that Haswell (2006) did not take a pessimistic stand about response. His clearly stated goal was to provide an analysis that adequately accounted for the complexities of the activity so that better informed instructors could devise more efficient response methodologies. In this process, Haswell proved to be a forerunner to Montgomery's (2009) dissertation study, which concluded that "The primary goal of my study is to explore students' subjective experience of teacher response to their writing… Some of the implications of this study suggest that we need to spend more time in class educating students about feedback and response, and that we need to rethink, modify, and experiment with the ways we respond, especially in terms of creating dialogic response" (Abstract).

My argument has been that Response 2.0, the entire constellation of response that employs audio- and video-recording, has been and continues to be a successful "experiment" in creating dialogic response. As we have seen, there is a long history of studies in the literature that makes clear that students like recorded commentary. When asked for their preferences between audio-recording and written comments, students have voted overwhelmingly for the audio approach: Sipple (2007b) reported that 89% of students surveyed prefer audio response (n=197); Dixon (2010) reported 95% (n=57); Merry and Orsmond (2008) reported 87%

(n=15); and my own study (2012) reported 90% (n=97). When I asked my students what they liked least about video commentary, 36.7% of them had no complaint whatsoever (the most frequent response to the question), and when I asked for advice on how to improve it, 56.1% said it was fine as is. Those who offered advice simply requested more of it (28%), echoing the 9% whose major criticism of the video commentary was that there simply were not enough comments to suit them. Anecdotal evidence, which predominates in the published literature, has tended to confirm that students have strongly positive reactions to audio and video commentary, and the plethora of student comments cited in this essay also conveys the strong impression that students are fans of the various Response 2.0 approaches.

The major shift between written and various oral response methodologies worth noting is, I am convinced, the difference between what Hunt (1975) called the "spatial display" of written comments and the "temporal display" of audio comments (p. 583). Response 2.0 can be fuller, deeper, and broader than written response because most teachers can speak faster than they can write or type, and the technology itself frees audio and video responders from the constraints of space on a printed page of text. They can range over the student text easily by simply referring students to "page 3, paragraph 2, the sentence that begins…", inserting comments into an electronic text, or by scrolling to and highlighting key passages. Moore and Filling (2012) even reported on one instructor whose videos featured her onscreen talking to the student with the student's paper in hand. Free of the spatial confines of the text, teachers can easily range back into the shared past of student and teacher, focus on their current responses as a reader engaged with the student's draft, and look ahead to the shared future of further work in the course. These are distinct advantages that students seem to recognize and that facilitate successful response.

Haswell (2006) concluded his essay by summarizing the challenges faced by instructors as they respond to student writing. He wrote, "It requires sifting through the options and contradictions of regulation, navigating the constraints of consumption, weighing the cost of production, critiquing the masks of representation, and working with and not against student and teacher identities" (p. 21). In this current moment, as the field of writing instruction begins to embrace the changing scenes of writing in the 21st century and the engagement of Web 2.0 technologies, the time seems right for response to continue its evolution in order to negotiate the complexities outlined by Haswell. Response 2.0 has, seemingly, been a shadow methodology for five decades, explored and researched by several disparate discourse communities that continue to reach very similar conclusions about the efficacy of such response. The time for Response 2.0 to come out of the shadows and into the mainstream has arrived. JCLL

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APPENDIX A:
How to Use Video Recorded Comments

1. Find a quiet place to watch the video without interruptions. Try to watch the video as soon as possible after I've notified you that they're ready.
2. Watch the video straight through without pausing in order to familiarize yourself with what I had to say.
3. Watch the video again with your draft and memo in front of you.
4. *Pause the video to write down notes* that you want to remember or that you want **to discuss with me**. Jot your notes right on a hard copy of the draft or type them onto your file as inserted comments, at the appropriate points in the text if possible.
5. Listen carefully for positive comments–they will be there! I hope you will feel good enough about your draft to want to revise it. (I will, however, *always* find more things to suggest!)
6. Think about the suggestions and questions you've heard. **Free write for five minutes about your reactions–ideas that occur to you, questions you might have for me, plans for revision.** These notes will be helpful when you do revise or come to see me.
7. Make an appointment to see me to discuss my comments if you don't understand them or if you don't agree with them or if you're angered by them.* If I get cut off—the software stops me at 5 minutes—and seem to have left off something you needed to know, make an appointment come see me.
8. Finally, when you've revised the draft and want to resubmit it, follow the instructions on the "How to Revise for This Course" handout.

*In my comments, I try to be positive, enthusiastic, honest, and tactful. Most of us are very sensitive about our writing, however, and often anything less than total praise can be upsetting. Sometimes we get upset because we're hearing things that we already knew but were trying to deny, and sometimes anxiety makes us hear things in the wrong way. If you're upset, wait a couple of days and watch the video again to see if you still feel the same way. If you do, then come see me. **MANY PAPERS THAT AREN'T QUITE ON TARGET HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BECOME QUITE GOOD FINAL DRAFTS, BUT YOU HAVE TO REVISE THEM FOR THAT TO HAPPEN.**