

Comment and Revision Assessment

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SLAC-WPA 2013
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Taxonomy of comments

- First level – surface or substance?
- Then –
 - ★ Problem-identification
 - ★ Editing
 - ★ Describing
 - ★ Praising
 - ★ Mitigating
 - ★ Questioning
 - ★ Advising/Suggesting
 - ★ Other

Examples of comments

- WRIT100C
Paper 1, Draft 1
Comment 1A: “reword sentence,” where the student had written “Many individuals now believe that sports are not only an entertainment business but can also be very useful in various ways.”
- This comment addresses a **surface** matter, syntax, and gives **advice** to the writer.
- WRIT100C
Paper 1, Draft 1
Comment 1C: “in a child’s life,” was written above the line of type in the draft accompanied by an insert arrow indicating where the phrase should go, where the student had written “Between the ages of four and ten years old, a lot of development takes place and organized sports can aid to speed up and support this development.”
- This comment also addresses a **surface** matter, clarity, and it consists of an **edit** supplied by the teacher.
- WRIT100C
Paper 5, Draft 1
Comment 1U: A terminal comment on the draft addresses the substance of what the writer is trying to say in the draft as a whole and incorporates problem identification, describing, praising, mitigating, and advising/suggesting: “Lot of good pts. but you never address why parents want their kids to get scholarships so bad. They may not be able to afford college, but want their kids to have that opportunity.”
- WRIT100B
Paper3, Draft 1
Comment 1B: A brief terminal note on this draft **identified** three **substantive problems** in the draft: “better organization needed; more addressing of opposing arguments; far too short.” The first and last items in this note **describe** features of the draft; the second is **advising/suggesting**.

Taxonomy of revisions

- First level –
 - Surface/Substance
- If surface –
 - Formal/Meaning-Preserving
- If substance –
 - Meaning-Changing at micro-level/Meaning-Changing at macro-level

Formal changes include ...

- ★ spelling
- ★ tense
- ★ number
- ★ modality
- ★ abbreviation
- ★ punctuation
- ★ formatting
- ★ other grammar

Substantive changes include ...

- ★ additions
- ★ deletions
- ★ substitutions
- ★ permutations
- ★ distributions
- ★ consolidations
- (Whether meaning-preserving or –changing)

Examples of revisions

- WRIT100C
Paper 1, Draft 2
Revision 1A: By means of a **permutation** move, the student addressed the *surface* concern the teacher had identified in the first draft; the change to the sentence **preserved the meaning** of the original, although it did attempt to clarify it. The revised draft said, “Once thought to be simply an entertainment business many individuals believe that sports can be a very useful [*sic*] in many various ways.”
- WRIT100C
Paper 1, Draft 2
Revision 1L: The student made a **formal** change, attending to a surface problem identified by the instructor when he read the first draft, changing “child” to “children.” The writer seems to have attended to write “children” in the first place because the sentence the instructor commented on in the first draft read, “This adult

inference [sic] can cause child to become frustrated and give up on sports or could even cause children to cheat. ...” So this revision is *meaning-preserving*

- WRIT100C

Paper5, Draft 2

Revision 1B: With an *addition*, the student made a *substantive* change at the *micro-structure level*: the meaning of the passage, not the whole paper, was altered: Right after the sentence quoted above in the example of a comment that addresses substance in the form of a question, the student’s revised draft said, “Although steroids do provide individuals with abnormal strength, there are still negative effects to using steroids. But used in moderation, the effects of steroids are not too harsh, and the individual is capable of living a long and prosperous life.”

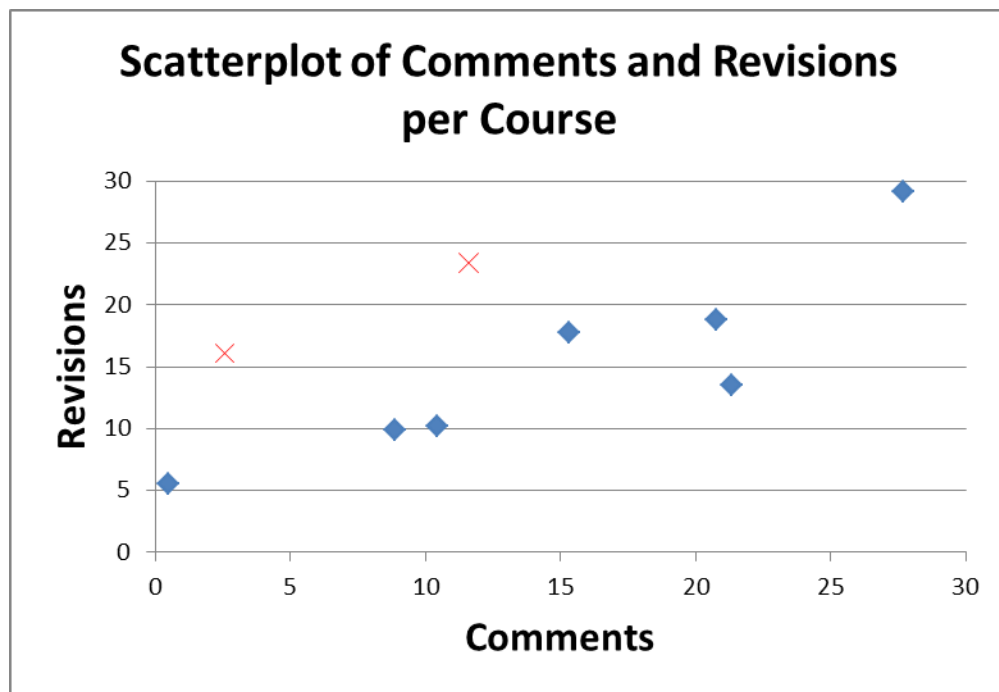
- WRIT100B

Paper 3, Draft 2

Revision 2C: the student followed up on the instructor’s suggestion to “address ... opposing arguments” by *adding* a 112-word passage in his opening paragraph; this sentence from the passage illustrates the move: “Not only do we recognize the negatives that come from television onto children, but on the other side of things positive effects have been reported as well.” Here, the *meaning is changed on the macro-level* of the draft because the first draft had nothing about “opposing arguments” to the claim that watching television is bad for children.

Averages of comments and revisions, per paper, per course

Course/No. of papers	Comments		Revisions	
	Surface	Substance	Surface	Substance
WR100A (5)	39.4	11.6	25.2	23.4
WR100B (6)	68	27.67	24.16	29.17
WR100C (7)	15.7	10.43	9.85	10.14
ECON325 (9)	27.8	15.33	21.44	17.78
POSC330 (9)	23.6	2.56	12.6	16.11
PSYC211 (6)	21	21.33	23.8	13.5
ENG220 (9)	23.3	8.89	16.37	9.89
MUS283 (2)	68.5	0.5	19	5.5
NURS316 (4)	30.8	20.75	25.25	18.5



Sources – Taxonomizing comments

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