Whole-Class Workshops: The Transformation of Students Into Writers

Ian Barnard

Whole-class workshops are under-theorized and under-utilized in the composition classroom, despite the many benefits they offer over more commonly used small peer workshop groups as a method of providing students with feedback on drafts of their writing. Whole-class workshops translate into practice the repeated insistence of much composition theory that students need to imagine themselves writing to an audience other than their teacher; they also show students the difficulties and rewards of negotiating responses to and assessments of someone else's writing, and ultimately develop in them the skills and self-confidence necessary to evaluate their own writing. If students are adequately prepared for whole-class workshops and facilitated the workshops themselves, these workshops dramatically impact student writing, students' conceptions of themselves as writers, and instructors' understanding of their identifications as teachers of writing.

Despite the long history of whole-class workshops as the de rigueur pedagogical technique and classroom format in creative writing courses, their presence in composition theory and teaching remains relatively small, especially compared to other methods of providing students with feedback on their writing-in-progress, such as small peer groups and individual instructor conferences. The literature on the teaching of creative writing takes it as a given that classes are usually taught in the form of whole-class workshops—significantly, these courses are usually referred to as "workshops": "Fiction Workshop," "Advanced Poetry Workshop," etc. In their handbook, Creating Fiction: A Writer's Companion, Fred Leebro and Andrew Levy matter-of-factly describe what commonly happens in the creative writing classroom: "In most workshops [...] a story that will be discussed during a given class period is distributed a few days or a week earlier, to give everyone the opportunity to read the manuscript and prepare comments" (287, my emphasis).

It is not clear to me exactly why teachers of composition have not embraced whole-class workshops with the zeal of our colleagues who teach creative writing. I have found many of my own composition colleagues suspicious of whole-class workshops, skeptical of both their pedagogical effectiveness and the practicality of implementing them in college composition courses. I myself was at first reluctant to use whole-class workshops when a colleague, Jennifer Fennell, extolled their virtues to me and begged me to give them a try. It sounded like too much of a change from what I was used to doing in the classroom, they seemed too time-consuming, and I was worried that students (and I) would find the process of discussing every student's paper as a whole class boring and/or tedious. It took Jennifer three years to talk me into whole-class workshops, but now, many years later, I cannot image teaching composition without whole-class workshops. In this article, I explain some of the specifics of how I organize whole-class workshops in my writing classes and give a rationale for using this system of peer feedback in composition courses. I also discuss and respond to the most common fears I hear writing instructors express regarding whole-class workshops.

There is a substantial body of scholarship making the case for peer critique in general; in addition, much has been written specifically discussing the value of peer critique in the college writing classroom. Peer critique is even used now in many K-12 writing classrooms as well (see Lillios and Iiding). Scholars who discuss and/or advocate student peer critique generally agree on its benefits. In the case of peer critiques of writing, those responding to the writing are exposed to a variety of writing qualities/styles/techniques, acquire valuable training in critical
analysis, and learn to apply their critiques of others’ writing to their own work (Paton 291, Tang and Tithecott). Writers develop a concrete sense of audience (other than the teacher) and are prodded “to reflect on their practices and goals as well as the real and potential impact of their communications” (Cahill 304) through discovering the range of ways in which readers read their work. Both readers and writers learn better and more when they do so from their peers as well as from an instructor (Sargent); specifically, they “learn relatively quickly what good writing is” (Lindemann 205), feel themselves participating in a community of writers (Sargent), experience and benefit from collaboration (Ransdell 32, Varone), and gain practice in other interpersonal skills (Tang). All in all, increased time is spent “on task: thinking, comparing, contrasting, and communicating” (Topping 254).3

However, almost all of the scholarship on peer critique in the composition classroom discusses small-group work, rather than whole-class workshops. NCTE’s newly-published collection, Strategies for Teaching First-Year Composition (Roen, et al), is a fairly comprehensive compendium of strategies for and issues facing college composition teachers, but it makes no mention of whole-class workshops as a pedagogical strategy. Tellingly, the collection’s two essays on “peer review,” while giving helpful theoretical and practical foundations for peer review, assume throughout that “peer review” means small-group workshops (see Paton, Cahill), as does the paragraph introducing this section of the book, “Orchestrating Peer-Response Activities.”

I have found whole-class workshops to be much more successful than small-group workshops or individual student conferences in helping the whole class to articulate and negotiate our criteria for effective writing and to discuss and practice a variety of rhetorical strategies in the context of specific student papers. Like small-group workshops, whole-class workshops show students the difficulties and rewards of negotiating responses to and assessments of someone else’s writing, ultimately developing in them the skills and self-confidence necessary to evaluate their own writing. However, the larger workshops give students a much greater amount and variety of feedback on their work. Perhaps the greatest advantage of whole-class workshops over the more commonly used small-group workshops is that in the former system everyone in the class acquires a sense of every other class member’s writing and students get a better picture of the relationship of their writing to other class members’ work. Student texts become the texts for the class, student writing becomes the focus of attention, and the class functions more as a communal whole as the shared texts are taken up by the class as a whole. Students become invested in each other’s writing to such a degree that they often discuss each other’s papers and bring resources for each other’s papers long after a particular workshop has taken place. In addition, the worked-through papers become discussion reference points throughout the course, something that could not happen in the context of small-group workshops, where individual groups discuss different student papers and no student writing serves as a common course text. The intense focus by the whole class on one student text cannot be matched by the small-group process. Also, because the entire class is engaged in the discussion of a particular student text, and because the teacher is present at every discussion, workshop respondents tend to be more serious about what they are doing and are less likely to stray from the task at hand than they would in a small group. Class members are not saddled with a small group that might be unproductive or with a few group members with whom they might not get along.

The whole-class workshops that I use are designed for students to receive written and oral feedback on their writing-in-process from a large group of other writers prior to revising their work. Unlike small-group workshops, where a limited number of students respond to each workshop text, and unlike more traditional whole-class discussions, where the teacher takes on the primary role of leading the discussion, the workshops I advocate involve every student in the class as a facilitator, respondent, or workshopee of each workshop paper. My classes usually run in size from 20 to 25 students. Very small classes would be more conducive to these workshops due to the small number of respondents; very large classes would limit all students’ participation in the workshops, and make it difficult to find adequate time to assign each student a workshop.
Near the beginning of the course, students draw workshop dates. Each student has only one whole-class workshop during the semester (which doesn’t mean, of course, that students don’t benefit from the workshops where their own writing is not under discussion). Each student also signs up to facilitate a workshop; since facilitation can be nerve-wracking, no one may facilitate on the same day as her workshop.

The most important component of the whole-class workshop process takes place before the actual workshops begin: this is the preparation for the workshop procedures, which involves discussing the procedures and objectives, as well as the rationale for the concept of whole-class workshops as a pedagogical and compositional tool. Teachers cannot expect students to perform effectively in these workshops without adequate training, modeling, and discussion, as the workshops often represent a radical departure from the teacher-centered modes of pedagogy to which students are accustomed, even in their writing classes. Long before we begin the workshops, I discuss the workshop guidelines with my students (see Handout A), explaining in detail the three roles (facilitator, workshoppe, and respondent) that class members will take on during each workshop. I encourage students to become actively involved in the conceptualization of the workshops by having them discuss the guidelines in groups and generate lists of problems they envisage facing as workshop facilitators, questions they have about their roles as workshop respondents, and anxieties they feel about having their writing discussed in a whole-class workshop. We discuss these lists, without necessarily attempting to solve the problems or come up with definitive answers to the questions. We also talk about the evaluation criteria for each writing assignment before the paper drafts for that assignment are due to be worked on, not only for the benefit of the writers, but also so that workshop respondents and facilitators know what to write about and talk about as they respond to the drafts and what kinds of questions to ask during the workshops. I explain that my final evaluation of student writing will take into account the writer’s engagement with (not necessarily agreement with) respondents’ comments about her paper draft.

Each student brings copies of her paper draft to class the period before her workshop. She passes out the copies to all members of the class. Before the following class meeting, everyone reads the workshop papers and prepares a typewritten response to each paper. All class members bring two copies of each response to class, one for the writer of the paper and one for me. I grade these responses on a credit/no credit basis. We discuss sample responses, and I make it clear that I do not award credit to a response merely because it is turned in (see Handout B for response guidelines and sample responses).

In my experience, if the workshops are to include effective oral participation by each member of the class, all respondents need to bring to the workshops their written reaction to the writing(s) under discussion. This way, each workshop begins with a focused and thoughtful discussion of the paper under review, everyone has material to talk about, and written points that don’t get covered in the workshop still reach the writer. Students who don’t talk much in class might make substantial written contributions for the writer whose paper is under discussion. Because the written responses are typed up ahead of time, and because I see them, they are usually detailed and helpful; students take this responsibility seriously and are often eager to help their classmates. Thus a considerable amount of the writing that students do in the class is writing about writing. The responses form a substantial part of the writing that students complete during the course of the semester and make up a significant portion of the final course grade.

The oral discussion of a paper is seldom redundant, as respondents tend to build on their written comments and on the oral comments of other class members. The engagements of class members with one another as they animatedly discuss a particular paper, the insights they come to as a result of the group thinking-speaking process, their retractions and negotiations, and the collective assistance they give to the writer they are discussing are often the most exciting and productive aspects of the workshops and the course as a whole. The workshops are seldom boring, and class members hardly ever run out of things to say. The workshops always get better as the semester progresses, and students become more confident
writers and critics of their own writing as a result of the workshops. As a consequence of the responsibility they take in responding to the writing of others and in writing to a real audience of their peers, students begins to think of themselves as writers as well as students.

On the first day of workshops, I facilitate the initial workshop. I tell students beforehand that I will intentionally make some mistakes as a facilitator and that we will evaluate my performance as a facilitator after the workshop. After the workshop, I also ask the workshopers and respondents to talk about how they felt during the workshop, what they felt they did well, and what they felt they did poorly. This kind of processing of the workshops continues throughout the semester. After each workshop, respondents turn in one copy of their response to the workshoped paper to the writer of the paper and one to me. I do not write responses to the workshop papers in order not to undermine the responses of the other class members and thus the entire whole-class workshop process. Once the first workshop is over, the student facilitators run the workshops. While I participate in the workshops, I make every effort not to take over and not to allow students to privilege my comments over the comments of other respondents. Each workshop lasts for about 20 minutes. I evaluate workshop facilitators on a credit/no credit basis (based on the criteria listed under “Tips for Workshop Respondents” in Handout A below) and regularly discuss the facilitators’ performance in class.

One of the perennial conflicts writing instructors work with is the teacher’s informed conviction that students should not write just “for the teacher” against the reality of the classroom situation where the teacher is authority and grade-giver. When students facilitate whole-class workshops, most class members begin to wean themselves away from teacher-centeredness. They have to look to the facilitators rather than to the instructor for guidance during the workshops. They soon find themselves having a conversation about writing with one another, rather than simply listening to or responding to me as dutiful students. By speaking about writing to and through other students in the class, and through experiencing the value of their peers’ feedback, students come to conceptualize the class as a community of

writers and themselves as writers and critics, roles they often have difficulty imagining for themselves in the context of the classroom. They find themselves writing for the other members of the class, looking forward to discussing class members’ writing, and having their own writing read by their peers. The workshops translate into practice the lip service much composition theory and many writing teachers pay to the importance of writing for a “real” audience, the imperative that students need to and/or do write to an audience other than their teacher.

One of the very few pieces of scholarship in composition studies to envisage the possibility of and discuss whole-class workshops, rather than small-group workshops, is D. R. Ransdell’s “Class Workshops: An Alternative to Peer-Group Review.” However, in Ransdell’s model the teacher always leads the workshops; I don’t believe this experience gives students the same sense of an audience as do workshops facilitated by other class members, because respondents tend to want to address themselves to the teacher-facilitator, who then also becomes the sole imagined reader-audience for students’ writing. Interestingly, Ransdell notes that some of his students’ workshop drafts are poor in quality (35). My experience has been the opposite: workshop drafts are usually far superior to drafts turned in to me only, and students have told me that they tend to be more concerned about what their peers think of their writing than about what a teacher thinks. I can’t help wondering if the quality of Ransdell’s students’ workshop papers might be attributable to the distinction between students leading the workshops (and thus the writers’ sense of writing for the class rather than for the teacher) and the teacher leading all workshops.

Some students do remain skeptical of their classmates’ abilities to respond to their papers and/or feel that they need more feedback from the instructor, since they tend to think of the instructor as the ultimate writing authority/expert/evaluator. I point out that writers get better and more feedback from the whole class (including me) than from me alone, so the potential for producing stronger writing is greater as a result of whole-class workshops. I cannot think of everything and I might not articulate everything as well as someone else might. This is not
naively to suggest that the workshops are the great equalizer in student-teacher power relations, but rather to acknowledge that even within these power relations, writing teachers benefit from collaboration, teachers don't have all the answers, and teachers often have uncertainties, blocks, and frustrations; it is also an acknowledgement that strong writing isn't always predictable, the product of a formula or of a student's obedient fulfillment of a finite number of teacher guidelines/prescriptions.

Teachers are often worried that students will respond “incorrectly” to a paper, but I have found that the comments I would make about a paper draft always get voiced by at least one other respondent in the class and that the variety of responses to the workshop papers frequently complicate and enrich my own initial responses to them. Students often read each other's papers in ways I might not have. The arguments and negotiations that students have with one another and with me during the workshops, after I have urged them not to take my word for something just because I am the teacher, sometimes result in students convincing me that they are right and I am wrong on a particular point. The pleasures that students' insights have brought me during the workshops have drastically altered my own identifications as a reader, writer, and teacher of writing.

On one memorable occasion, I came to class feeling confident that the piece of writing under discussion, a collaborative critical ethnography about student visitors to a local bar, lacked a "point" and needed more commentary from the writers. Each of the female and male co-writers described the same interactions among the bar-goers, but these interactions seemed routine to me, and the differences in the descriptions lacking significance. However, after listening to other class members talk about the piece's complexity and subtlety, the possibility that the differences between two writers' perspectives might be explained in terms of gender, the equally plausible possibility that the differences in perspective had nothing to do with gender, and the even more interesting possibility that both kinds of “differences” might well be constructions of readers, I completely altered my opinion, and confessed to the class that I had done so. I started to conceptualize the piece as much about reading and readers as it was about the writers and their subjects. I now valued the elliptical elements in the project and thought of its lack of explicit “focus” as a strength rather than a failing. My role had shifted from mere teacher to reader as well as teacher, and members of the class, by now excited by their own readings of the paper under discussion, had become teachers as they explained their readings to me and others in the class. The writers of the piece might very well have undergone their own reinterpretations of their work as they heard the shifting readings of it, feeling their own positions moving from writers and students to teachers and readers.

Ransdell's assertion, “Workshops are exciting because I'm never sure how they'll go” (39), holds true for me largely because of the large number of participants in the workshops and because I am a sincere participant in them rather than only a teacher/leader/parent figure. At the same time that I learn and profit from my students' readings of each other's texts, they also gain confidence in their skills as assessors of writing; they realize that they—as writers—have insightful contributions to make to class discussions and no longer act as if they were empty vessels waiting to be filled by the teacher-expert.

These realizations can only take place when teachers re-conceptualize conventional understandings of teacher-student relations, and of the role of students in the classroom. In her article, “Student Response Groups: Training for Autonomy,” Barbara Walvoord advocates sequential small-group workshops as a way of overcoming what she views as the problems of simultaneous small-group workshops (primarily the inability of the teacher to monitor all the groups at once). While I share Walvoord's goal of “training” students “for autonomy” and would be the first to admit that the teacher's presence can make a difference in the workshops, I fundamentally disagree with her assumptions—shared by many teachers—about the unidimensional roles and abilities of teachers and students. She doesn't envisage teachers as writers or students and doesn't see students as writers or teachers. To her, all college students seem to be children, for whom teachers should function as quasi-parents—the “freshman in a composition class” is “still in need of some parental guidance” (45). The instructor serves as “trainer
The biggest concern my colleagues seem to have about implementing a whole-class workshop system in their writing classrooms is the considerable amount of class and homework time that these workshops take up. The workshops do use up many class periods and demand a lot of reading and writing from students outside of class (not to mention the extra reading, evaluating, and paper-shuffling they create for instructors). This is especially true if they are properly prepared for, as the preparation for them requires additional time. I see this "sacrifice" of class time for the workshops as an important component of the "letting go" process required of instructors if the workshops are to be successful. Writing teachers who have a course packed with their own agendas and who are concerned that workshops will leave little time to fulfill these agendas often find the process of learning to trust their students to comment on each other's work revelatory—and relieving, because it takes some of the burden off the instructor. Learning to pull back from their own agendas to focus on student writing also prepares instructors to hold back during the workshops themselves. In the course of doing so, they will find their panic assuaged as every imaginable writing issue arises and is discussed in the course of examining "real" student writing rather than as abstract lessons that students often have difficulty applying to their own work.

Yes, students often feel anxious about having their papers workshopped by the whole class and sometimes resent all the writing entailed in the workshop responses; some are terrified at the prospect of facilitating a workshop; and, yes, some workshops get out of control while others are dead; and, yes, I do have moments of reflective and/or regretful panic during the workshops. But these moments are always outweighed by my satisfaction after a particularly rich or provocative or productive or insightful workshop (including workshops of my own writing) and by the students' own comments in their end-of-semester course evaluations on their enjoyment of the workshops and their maturation as students and writers over the course of the semester as a result of these workshops. 

Walvoord trains students to learn from her how to respond, what responses are "correct" and "appropriate;" therefore students are infantilized rather than shown from the start that they have valuable contributions to make to the workshops as writers, readers, critics, and scholars. Whole-class workshops might solve some of the problems Walvoord identifies with smaller groups—such as students getting the "wrong" kind of feedback on their writing—because students get so many more writers' responses to their writing. Thus whole-class workshops might obviate the need for the teacher to take on the kind of role Walvoord describes. Many teachers can only imagine themselves—and not students—leading whole-class workshops; however, I believe that a model in which the teacher dominates the workshops would destroy the workshops' pleasure (for teacher and students) and effectiveness.

and as shaper of the group's norms [...] around whose pole the group will coalesce (40).

In the initial workshops, Walvoord most often finds herself bringing up "an issue the group has not thought about" (41), and says that "when the group says so much so well that I have nothing to add, we make it an occasion for self-congratulation" (42). Walvoord doesn't seem to see herself in the position of learning anything during these workshops; she is always and only the authority. She saves time students might otherwise spend "arguing with each other" about "straightforward informational issues, such as documentational conventions" (42)—presumably by giving the students the "answer" herself. This understanding of these "straightforward" issues belies the fact that topics such as documentation and mechanics are contested and not clear-cut, that teachers often have their own difficulties with these issues, and that students may be "experts" on some of them. If Walvoord "senses" that a workshop has been "confusing or contradictory to the writer," she "summarizes" what she thinks the group's response has been, or suggests "to the writer what I think he or she should tackle first" (44). Here again she usurps what I believe is the purpose of the workshops by providing the final word on the piece of writing under discussion. In this case, why not just have an individual conference with the student?

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Notes

1. See, for instance, Robert Miles’ “Creative Writing, Contemporary Theory and the English Curriculum.”
2. For other examples of the permutations of work on peer critique, see Barron, Benesch, Bishop, Crowhurst, DiPardo and Freedman, Erickson, Holt, Leverenz, McAlexander, Neubert and McNelis, Newkirk, Ransdell, Reiter, Schaffer, Tipper and Malone, Vatalaro, Valvoord, and Zhu.
3. This assumption is articulated in a note to teachers in The St. Martin’s Handbook: “By writing an audience profile for each paper, your students will begin to see that they are constructing an audience that goes beyond you” (Glenn, Lunsford, and Connors 26). For some overviews and discussions of the arguments about audience in general, and specifically in the context of teaching writing, see Ede and Lunsford, Elbow, Kirsche and Roen, Kroll, Ong, Park, Petraglia, and Selzer.
4. My thanks to Jenifer Fennell, Jill Swinczek, Anil Rainin, Joy Ross, Wade Mahon, and the reviewers for Issues in Written Communication, for feedback, ideas, and words for this article. Thank you also to the students who gave me permission to use their workshop responses (they requested to remain anonymous).

Works Cited


Appendix A

HANDOUT A

TIPS FOR THE WRITER OF A PAPER BEING WORKSHOPPED

1) Don't be defensive.
2) Don't speak until invited to do so by the workshop facilitator.
3) Take notes of your colleagues' comments and suggestions regarding your paper.
4) Come to class ready and willing to substantially revise your paper.
5) Use your own judgment in deciding which suggestions to follow, ignore, and modify.
6) Don't feel overwhelmed by all the comments on your paper; prioritize them.
7) Rather than approaching a workshop with dread, think of the workshop as a rare opportunity to get the constructive feedback on your work of many other writers who have spent time and energy reading and thinking about your paper. Feel flattered.
8) When it's your turn to speak, you must ask at least one question about your paper; you may also ask your colleagues to clarify points they have made in the workshop. Remember, this is your opportunity to get valuable feedback on your work; use it well. Do not use this time to defend or justify your paper.

TIPS FOR WORKSHOP RESPONDENTS

1) Speak at least once during each workshop.
2) Prioritize your points.
3) Comment on the paper's strengths and weaknesses.
4) Don't be afraid to criticize a paper, but be diplomatic.
5) Make your comments specific and concrete; give specific revision suggestions.
6) Try to connect your comments to comments other respondents have made.

7) Don’t talk all the time.
8) Don’t let silences make you uncomfortable.
9) When it’s time for the writer of the paper to join the discussion, you may ask her questions and/or invite her response to her colleagues’ comments on the paper.

TIPS FOR WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

(I will use these criteria to evaluate workshop facilitators.)

1) Keep the discussion on track.
2) It is your responsibility to get everyone in the class to talk; don’t let the same people talk all the time.
3) Don’t ask yes/no questions.
4) Don’t ask leading questions.
5) Encourage respondents to elaborate on their comments or give specific examples or suggestions.
6) Try to create a dialogue among workshop respondents, rather than having each respondent make comments that are isolated from other respondents’ comments.
7) Encourage respondents to follow the TIPS FOR WORKSHOP RESPONDENTS above, especially point #3.
8) Pay attention to class members so that you can see who wants to speak.
9) You may also comment on the paper (follow the TIPS FOR WORKSHOP RESPONDENTS above), but don’t hog the time.
10) Don’t let silence make you uncomfortable.
11) Don’t allow the writer of the paper to speak during the first half of the workshop; about halfway through the workshop, invite her to join the discussion; be sure that the writer asks at least one question about her paper; you might also ask her questions and/or invite her response to her colleagues’ comments on the paper. Do not allow the writer to use the workshop as an opportunity to defend her paper.
12) Ensure that the writer of the paper takes notes during the workshop.
13) Watch the time; ensure that the workshop lasts for the assigned amount of time.
14) There is no one “correct” way of leading the discussion.

Appendix B

HANDOUT B

Responses to Workshop Drafts (format open):

- Each response should be 250-500 words long.
- Make your comments and suggestions specific; support your assertions with examples from the paper, and give concrete revision suggestions (see sample responses).
- Be sure to discuss the paper’s strengths and weaknesses.
- Follow the evaluation rubric in the Course Reader (you obviously cannot cover all of these points; decide which points you want to focus on).
- Avoid using the word “flow” in your responses.
- Do not assume that a paper is effective because it is “easy to read.”
- Bring two typed, stapled copies of each response to class.
- Clearly indicate your name on both copies of each response, and the name of the writer whose draft you are responding to.

Sample Response (received “credit”):

Response to paper draft

The introduction of your paper does a good job of introducing the topic you are going to be discussing. Whether art can be obscene and censorship. When you say “as of right now, I feel people should be allowed to practice their freedom of speech.” What do you mean by as of right now? Does this mean something can change your mind? If so, what is it that could change your mind? Also what would constitute a more “responsible” format? I think these are some questions that if answered in your introduction can help better explain you opinion on the matter.

Using the case of Mike Diana is a good example of why people think the obscenity is justified in the zine article. Diana thinks art is something that cannot be obscene, good example to make
that point. In the second paragraph at the very end you say that no one wants to be accountable for children and that Hillary Clinton is right in her book, It takes a village to raise a child. It would be helpful to explain briefly what the book suggests and why it is so right.

The third paragraph does a nice job of explaining the complexity of art and who is it that determines art. You also make a good point that if adults cannot distinguish between art and obscenity then how can a child. This is a good argument for the reason why children should not be exposed to such zines.

The conclusion to your paper is effective but, a little brief. Maybe you can discuss what would constitute a more "responsible" paper. In the conclusion maybe give your opinion on whether you think it is alright for something to be obscene as long as it is a form of art. The topic of your paper is something that can be debated which made for an interesting paper.

**Sample Response (received “no credit”):**

One mans trash is another mans treasure

In this essay the writer uses strong and sophisticated vocabulary and that makes the paper extremely powerful. I thought the title of the essay was really interesting “One mans trash is another mans treasure”. Just the title by itself made me become interesting in the paper. I made me want to read the paper as soon as possible. As I read the paper I noticed that the writer was extremely descriptive and has strong writing skills. In my opinion the introduction paragraph is a little too short. The writer can definitely expand on the paragraph. I thought this essay was great except I felt that it was a little too short. If the writer would have made it a bit longer the essay would have been much stronger. Another thing that I noticed about the essay was that at times the writer was too broad. She could be a bit more specific. In the essay the writer didn’t really ask any questions and I think that’s perhaps something that she could work on. When I read an essay or even a paragraph when there are questions asked it makes me think about what I have read a lot more than if there are no questions. It also makes people analyze the paper more critically and compare it to other situations. And that makes the reader understand the paper much more. The body paragraphs were excellent it was detailed and well written. It gave me a clear understanding of the writers thoughts. I felt the conclusion paragraph was too short it’s a good paragraph but the writer should put more thoughts into that paragraph. But overall the essay is descriptive and the writer does a good job through out the paper. And that makes the paper very strong.

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