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The Power of Peer Evaluation: Rethinking Pedagogy in L2 Conversation Courses

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Article abstract

Research examining the effectiveness of using peer evaluation as a pedagogical tool in higher education is quickly emerging. Perceptions of such assessments, however, continue to vary among students and educators alike. This paper serves as a review of recent studies that center on peer evaluation, and highlights the positive and negative aspects of such assessments. Following a discussion of current investigations, researchers' collective findings are aligned with the parameters outlined in the CRGG-C framework, an infrastructure that is designed to capitalize on the benefits of peer evaluation (see Massery 2013), while also addressing some of the negative characteristics identified in the literature.

The Power of Peer Evaluation: Rethinking Pedagogy in L2 Conversation Courses

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Introduction

Peer evaluation (or peer assessment) is defined here as a procedure that allows learners to assess one another's performances by providing and receiving feedback (Mulder et al. 657). This type of assessment is useful for promoting language development (Lundstrom and Baker 30), supporting social learning (Liu and Careless 289), increasing active participation (Careless 62), and providing helpful comments for learners (Lundstrom and Baker 31). Using peer evaluation as a tool in the classroom is also known to have pedagogical benefits that contribute to the development of critical thinking skills (Mulder, Pearce, and Baik 166) and the achievement of learning outcomes; such outcomes include improved organization of discourse in writing and increased focus on vocabulary, among others (Mendoça and Johnson 756).

Research addressing the utility of peer evaluations as defined above is growing. In recent years, studies by Wen and Tsai; Lundstrom and Baker; Hu and Lam; Lee and Lim; Ahmadi and Zadeh; Mulder, Baik, Naylor, and Pearce; Mulder, Pearce, and Baik; and de Guerrero and Villamil have provided convincing evidence which suggests that peer evaluations are an effective form of assessment in higher education. Furthermore, several studies have even proposed that peer evaluations have the potential to positively impact learners' performance, primarily among struggling students (Mulder et al. 664).

The current work is not a research study in and of itself, though it serves as a review of recent investigations which look at the effectiveness of peer evaluation as a pedagogical tool, especially as it relates to L2 conversation courses. More specifically, though, the primary goal of this paper is to review a pedagogical framework that is rooted in research-based, peer assessment literature and designed to enhance peer interaction in the classroom. Through examining this research in the following section, I highlight both positive and negative aspects of using peer evaluation in higher education. In sections three through seven, I examine the different parameters that make up the pedagogical framework—partially introduced in "Making conversation stick" (Massery 2013)—, which outlines an infrastructure specifically designed to capitalize on the positive aspects of peer review while also addressing some of the negative characteristics of such assessments.

The framework, referred to by Massery as the Controlled Random Group Generator in Conversation, or CRGG-C (29), is subsequently broken down and aligned with principles disclosed in peer review research. As a result, I outline the various components of the organizational infrastructure, finally concluding this work in section eight, at which point I return to fundamental concepts drawn from the literature. In doing so, I demonstrate not only how the CRGG-C framework is synchronized with current findings, but also how its organizational structure is designed to enhance learning through peer evaluation.

Research on Peer Review

Qualitative and quantitative research conducted on the effectiveness of peer evaluation in a variety of classroom settings, including writing courses, speaking courses, and content courses and involving peripheral factors like the role of cultural acceptance—both in L1 and L2—are emerging. Some research, like that of Ahmadi and Zadeh, has also investigated the effects of using rubrics and the role of assessment training in peer review exercises. Although many of the same accolades and concerns regarding peer assessments converge across disciplines and are applicable in a variety of academic settings, much of the work centres on writing courses, while less research has been conducted on the utility of peer assessment in conversation courses. In what follows, I review this research, highlighting various aspects of peer evaluation, later providing ideas and recommendations for its application.

For their investigation, Lundstrom and Baker, in a study which looks at the effectiveness of using peer review in second language writing courses, recruited ninety participants who were assigned to either the control group, referred to as "receivers," or the experimental group, known as "givers." The control group was made up of students who "received" feedback on essays they had written for class, while the experimental group "gave" feedback (i.e.,

made comments about the work their peers had submitted for evaluation). Over the course of four weeks, both groups underwent training on how to evaluate others' work, though each group followed a slightly different program from the other. The experimental group (or "givers"), was taught how to "provide" feedback for their peers. The control group (i.e., "receivers"), however, learned how to constructively "use" feedback to improve their writing skills in L2 English. The results of the data reveal that participants who evaluated the work submitted by their peers (i.e., the "givers") acquired better writing skills by the end of the treatment than members of the control group ("receivers"), whose work was solely evaluated. In other words, results of the data suggest that providing feedback for others was more conducive to learning and acquisition than exclusively receiving it.

Similar to the results reported in Lundstrom and Baker, Mulder, Pearce, and Baik found that evaluating peers' work was more conducive to learning than receiving feedback from them. For their study, quantitative and qualitative data were collected from graduate and undergraduate students through a series of pre- (n=278) and post-test (n=201) questionnaires that made inquiries about their perceptions of peer evaluation. The treatment, however, consisted of a series of peer-review exercises that learners were asked to complete and submit over the course of several weeks. The results of the data were both positive and negative: on one hand, they suggest that evaluating others' work was more beneficial for participants than learning how to incorporate feedback received by peers, thereby supporting the results reported in Lundstrom and Baker. On the other, the researchers discovered that participants did not always feel confident about their own ability to provide helpful feedback for their peers, nor were they convinced that the suggestions made by their peer evaluators were entirely accurate (166).

More specifically, the post-treatment questionnaires show that some students' confidence in their peers' ability to critique their work declined by the end of the study, despite the initial optimism and enthusiasm expressed at the beginning of the study. Additionally, the results suggest that some first year students were more skeptical about the utility of peer review than seasoned university students (162-163). Yet even with this decline, the majority of the participants (66%) supported the use of peer evaluation as a type of feedback and reported noticing improvement in their writing performances (165-166). However, several of the participants reported that they preferred the intervention of a supervising tutor or instructor (166) as opposed to relying exclusively on someone with comparable knowledge to their own (a peer).

Unlike the previous studies, Hu and Lam collected data exclusively from students at the post-graduate level, all of whom were L1 Chinese speakers learning English as a second language. For their study, the researchers required participants to complete a series of writing tasks that would ultimately be evaluated by their peers. In addition to these writing activities, participants were asked to complete interviews and questionnaires inquiring about perceptions of peer review practices. After coding the different types of feedback the participants provided on each other's work, the researchers found that many of the suggestions were considered to be valid (75%): a concept essentially operationalized as feedback that improved a peer's writing performance when properly incorporated into the revised draft (378). The relatively high percentage of valid feedback reported in the study suggests that learners were capable of providing appropriate and useful feedback for their peers. And while these findings are positive overall, the results of the qualitative data reveal that even though learners recognized the benefits of using peer review, this type of assessment was not readily accepted as the sole form of evaluation (384).

One of the most relevant studies to the present work is that of Ahmadi and Zadeh, who added an additional layer to research addressing peer review. For their study, the researchers investigated the role of rubrics and how they affect the peer review process. In order to carry out their study, the investigators collected data from eighteen participants studying English as a foreign language. As part of the treatment, participants were required to assess their peers' speaking ability in L2, based on their own perception of the performance being evaluated. During this phase of data collection, evaluators were asked to reflect on their peers' individual performances and make comments about what they heard (no definitions or guidance about "what" or "how" peer evaluators should assess or measure classmates' performances was provided). Upon completion of this exercise, the instructor of the course distributed a rubric to each of the participants offering detailed explanations about how to use the rubric and interpret the significance of its separate categories and content areas. Immediately following the instructors' explanations of the rubric, evaluators were asked to listen to a recording of the speech acts they assessed earlier in order to re-examine their peers' speaking ability in L2, this time using the rubric.

After transcribing, categorizing, and rating the data, the researchers employed a dependent paired-samples t-test in order to compare the average scores of the two types of assessments used to evaluate participants' oral performances (i.e., peer assessment [-rubric] vs. peer assessment [+rubric]). Using the t-test, researchers found that there was a statistically significant difference between the scores reported for each assessment type, suggesting that the addition of the rubric affected the way peers evaluated each other's speaking performances (4).

Furthermore, the researchers found that when participants assessed each other's speaking ability in L2 without the tangible parameters provided in the rubric, they (i.e., learners) had the tendency to focus on more peripheral features of speech acts, including volume of voice or use of salutations, as opposed to velocity of speech or grammatical accuracy in L2, for example (5). Explained differently, the rubric helped the learners to stay on task and focus on the important aspects of the skill in question.

Taken together, these findings propose that learners need opportunities to provide feedback to others in order to enhance their own progress. Recall that Lundstrom and Baker, for example, found that the evaluation of others' work yielded to students' progress and learning; solely receiving feedback, however, did not contribute to increased performance. In addition to these outcomes, Mulder, Pearce, and Baik reported that learners preferred to receive feedback from a tutor, instructor or facilitator rather than a peer; although there was evidence that learners were more willing to accept comments from their peers if feedback from an instructor or tutor was also available. And finally, research from Ahmadi & Zadeh suggests that rubrics, especially when they are accompanied by training or detailed explanations of use, have the power to significantly impact learners' perceptions of their peers' performances. Thus, successful peer review practices should: (1) provide learners with ample opportunities to evaluate classmates' work; (2) include the supervision of an instructor or tutor who can offer feedback and assess learners' performances along with, or in addition to, peer evaluators; and (3) incorporate rubrics and offer explicit instructions as to how to use specific assessment tools, as a way to help peer evaluators focus on important features of a given performance.

In the sections that follow, and with these findings in mind, I review and expand upon a framework introduced in Massery (2013), which was designed to help classroom facilitators successfully incorporate peer review in L2 classrooms as a pedagogical tool. In doing so, I evaluate this framework's ability to capitalize on the positive aspects of peer evaluation while also addressing some of the concerns identified in the research.

General Application: GRGG-C

Massery presents the Controlled Random Group Generator in Conversation, or CRGG-C, a framework that allows instructors or facilitators to randomly assign learners to groups of three in second language conversation courses, though the infrastructure can certainly be applied in other academic environments. By using the CRGG-C framework, learners have the opportunity to work with different students during each class, thereby avoiding monotony and repetition among peers (30). In addition, the CRGG-C framework increases the chances that students will be able to work with weaker and stronger learners, a situation which yields to scaffolding (see Lantolf for discussion of earlier research 52). What's more, the CRGG-C framework works to create a comfortable environment for learners by decreasing the affective filter (Krashen 30-32) and increasing interaction among peers, consequently fostering an environment that is more suitable for L2 conversation than the more traditional, unilateral pedagogies. Finally, the random allocation of students helps prevent learners from continually being assigned to the same roles and consequently accepting the same responsibilities. Simply put, under the CRGG-C framework, learners have opportunities to both evaluate (leading to acquisition) and to be evaluated (allowing time for oral practice).

According to Massery, application of the CRGG-C framework begins with a container filled with two-sided buttons, all of which are distributed at the beginning of each class. On one side of the button, students find a letter (A, B, C, D, E, etc.), which randomly assigns them to groups of three (or four if necessary). On the other side of the button, students see a number (1, 2, or 3) that corresponds to an explicit role within the group. Each number (or role) allocates a different set of responsibilities to each group member, ultimately ensuring that every learner serves as an integral part of the conversation (Massery 30-31). The different roles that are assigned to students within the CRGG-C framework include role #1 (Conversation Leader), role #2 (Conversation Contributor) and role #3 (Peer Evaluator).

Let us explore this activity, and presume for example that a student selects a button with the letter B and the number three. The letter B tells the student that s/he belongs to Group B, while the number three identifies the student as the Peer Evaluator of Group B (represented as B-3). As the Peer Evaluator, the student will participate in the conversation with group members B-1 (Conversation Leader) and B-2 (Conversation Contributor), though his/her performance will not be evaluated by his/her peers while serving as the Peer Evaluator. Instead, group member B-3 (Peer Evaluator) is responsible for completing and submitting the rubric to the instructor at the end of the class. If we continue with this same example, we know that group member B-1 (Conversation Leader) has the responsibility of sustaining the conversation and leading his or her peers through the exercise, while group member B-2

(Conversation Contributor) assists B-1 (Conversation Leader) in maintaining the flow and quality of the oral exchange (Massery 30-31). In this capacity, group members B-1 and B-2 have the opportunity to improve oral skills (output) by experimenting with a variety of grammatical forms through hypothesis testing (Gass 7). As a way to facilitate the activity and optimize performance, it is advisable to use conversation guides or assignment sheets, a strategy discussed further in section four.

Conversation Guides

Conversation guides are distributed to Conversation Leaders (i.e., role #1) at the beginning of class once groups and roles have been assigned and can be used to help students stay focused on the topic in question. Conversation guides also help learners maintain the fluidity of the discussion and prevent it from becoming stagnant, regardless of the dynamic or preparedness of the group. Furthermore, within the CRGG-C framework, the format and elaborate nature of the conversation guides can be determined by the instructor or course facilitator, though I suggest separating the conversation guides into three separate mini-conversations: warm-up activity, review of homework questions, and culmination exercise, following a format often available in foreign language textbooks. In my class, for example, students are advised to read their answers to homework questions out load several times prior to attending class; the additional practice and preparation contributes to learners' increased oral fluency and enhanced performance during subsequent conversations with peers. Including homework questions on the conversation guides allows students the opportunity to review material and clarify uncertainties about content read for class in a low-anxiety environment.

Finally, culmination exercises should appear on the conversation guides after the homework questions have been reviewed. Culmination exercises may include, though they are not limited to, applicable questions, discussion of famous quotes, riddles or even pictures related to the topic in question, as seen in *Revistas* (8-9). If we look at figure 1, we notice that there are three sets of questions: Conversation I: *Juegos de niños* (Children's games); Conversation II: *Interpretación* (Interpretation); and Conversation III: *¿Estás de acuerdo o no?* (Do you agree or disagree?). All three conversations are built around the topic of the day, *Viaje a Marte* (Travel to Mars), a short film directed by Argentine film director Juan Pablo Zaramella and included in students' course companion site (Vistas Supersite). The film invokes questions about childhood dreams, imagination, perception of reality, consequences of choices, effects of disappointment, and definitions of success, among others. Students are instructed to view the film and answer the assigned homework questions (see Conversation II in figure 1) in preparation for class.

Even though the questions in the first conversation (*Conversación I. Juego de niños*) and the affirmations in the third conversation (*Conversación III. ¿Estás de acuerdo: sí o no?*) are available in students' textbook—in this case, *Revistas* (5, 8)—, instructors do not need to assign them for homework. Rather, such questions can appear on the conversation guide as a way to get students thinking about the chosen topic, while also testing their (learners') linguistic agility, as they would not have answers prepared for these questions ahead of time.

With these ideas in mind, it is easy to understand why an instructor might choose to use a conversation guide in class. For starters, conversation guides allow the instructor to maintain some control over the conversation, even if s/he is not directly involved in the discussion. As a way to help facilitate the discourse, the instructor may wish to exclude material from the textbook, tailor existing content or include exercises taken from other sources. In doing so, the instructor has the ability to determine the difficulty and relevance of the questions based on the needs of his or her students. In my classes, for instance, I often create my own warm up questions (not included in figure 1) as a way to push learners slightly out of their comfort zone, before allowing them to return to the more familiar homework questions available in the second conversation. In my experience, the conversation guides lead to successful oral exchanges, as they help Conversation Leaders (role #1) maintain the quality and fluidity of the discussion. And while the conversation guides assist the Conversation Leaders with their duties, rubrics help the Peer Evaluators (role #3) stay focused on other group members' performances, a topic thoroughly discussed in section five.

Figure 1. Sample conversation guide[1]

CONVERSACIÓN I. JUEGOS DE NIÑOS
1. ¿Cómo te divertías cuando eras niño/a? ¿Qué jugabas y con quién?
2. ¿Mirabas mucho la televisión? ¿Cuáles eran tus programas preferidos?
3. ¿Qué era lo que más te aburría? ¿Qué era lo que más te entusiasmaba?
4. ¿Qué hacías para combatir el aburrimiento?
5. ¿Te contaban tus padres o tus abuelos historias de cuando ellos eran niños?
6. ¿Cómo estaba decorada tu habitación? ¿Qué objetos guardas (ahora) de tu infancia?
7. ¿Qué importancia tuvo la imaginación en tu infancia? ¿Qué importancia tiene ahora?
8. ¿Alguien te pidió o aconsejó que te comportaras como un adulto? ¿Quién te lo pidió: tus padres tus maestros, tus amigos?

CONVERSACIÓN II. INTERPRETACIÓN
1. ¿Por qué Antonio quiere ir a Marte cuando es niño?
2. ¿Por qué Antonio esconde el casco debajo de la cama? ¿Cómo se siente?
3. Cuando Antonio se hace adulto, ¿se considera una persona exitosa? ¿Por qué?
4. ¿Pierde el entusiasmo de la infancia y la capacidad de soñar? Justifica tu respuesta.
5. ¿Por qué Antonio nunca le contó a su esposa su viaje fantástico de la infancia?
6. ¿Qué crees que pasa por la mente del hijo cuando ve que su papá está en la tele?
7. ¿A qué problema se refiere el astronauta?
8. ¿Cómo interpretas el final de la historia?

CONVERSACIÓN III. ¿ESTÁS DE ACUERDO: SÍ O NO?
1. "La imaginación nos llevará a menudo a mundos que no existieron nunca, pero sin ella no podemos llegar a ninguna parte".
2. "La imaginación sirve para viajar y cuesta menos".
3. "El que tiene imaginación, con qué facilidad saca de la nada un mundo".
4. "La imaginación es más importante que el conocimiento".
5. "Todo lo que una persona puede imaginar, otras pueden hacerlo realidad".

Rubrics and Progress Reports

As discussed previously in section four, rubrics are included under the CRGG-C framework because, as demonstrated by Ahmadi and Zadeh in their research, the inclusion of rubrics in a peer evaluation exercise can significantly impact learners' perceptions of each other's performances (4). Their research suggests that training on how to use rubrics (that is, review of content areas, significance of categories, etc.) has the ability to increase Peer Evaluators' preparedness and comprehension of the peer review process. The categories available in the following rubric (i.e., vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and overall result) reflect the specific goals of the conversation course: (1) successful use of new vocabulary and increased lexical inventory; (2) improved pronunciation demonstrating movement toward target-like pronunciation; (3) greater velocity and ease when speaking; and (4) general morphosyntactic development. And while this particular rubric is not overly complex, and therefore may not require "training" in the way previous research has suggested, for example, it is advisable to spend a few minutes at the beginning of the semester reviewing the contents of the rubric and specifying exactly what peer evaluators should look for in regards to specific areas of performance. In other words, instructors should operationalize the different categories so that they align with the outcomes and objectives of the course; this is especially true for the "overall result" category in which a learner's knowledge of sentence structure and verb conjugation can be implicitly (or explicitly) evaluated. Furthermore, definitions of vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency may also vary by course or instructor background, thereby making the need for categorical explanations paramount for thorough and accurate peer analysis.

As part of the peer evaluation, evaluators are required to numerically rate their group members' individual performances using an interval scale from one to five. At the start of the semester, I briefly review the numbers with students informing them that the number one reflects a poor performance, the number three reflects an average performance, while five reflects a high performance. In addition to the numerical assessment of learners' performances, peer evaluators have the option to include written comments (29-30) about specific group members. In my experience, written comments often act as a window to individual conversations and help the instructor to assess all of the group members, including the Peer Evaluator. Moreover, such comments can ultimately be used to create weekly, bi-weekly or monthly progress reports (Massery 31), a topic that is discussed in subsequent paragraphs of this section.

Table 1. Sample Rubric for Peer Evaluators[2]

Peer Evaluation	Name Student A	Name Student B
Use Of Vocabulary: The group member successfully uses (or actively tries to use) vocabulary from the chapter. It is obvious that s/he is prepared to participate in the conversation and that s/he is able to use relevant vocabulary successfully.	Use of vocabulary from chapter **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5	Use of vocabulary from chapter **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5
Pronunciation: The group member attempts to pronounce all of the sounds correctly. Intonation is appropriate and natural. S/he is moving toward target-like ability, as defined by the instructor.	Good pronunciation of sounds **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5	Good pronunciation of sounds **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5
Fluency: The group member speaks without pauses and uses appropriate conversation strategies for this level. S/he stays in the target language all or most of the time. Little to no English is used during the conversation.	Speaks without pauses **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5	Speaks without pauses **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5
Overall result: Generally speaking, the group member communicates well orally in the target language. S/he is easily understood and messages are generally produced with speed and accuracy, as defined by the instructor.	Overall result **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5	Overall result **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5

Progress reports are a product of complied numerical and written analyses taken from the accumulation of submitted peer evaluations. These reports may include qualitative and quantitative data taken from peer assessments over an extended period of time. For my students, I take the average of each score reported in the different categories. If we look at the category of "fluency" (see table 1), for example, Student X might receive a rating of 3 during his first group conversation, a 4 during his second conversation, a 5 during this third conversation, and so on and so forth. Therefore, Student X receives an average score of 4 in the area of "fluency" for his first three conversations. The "overall result" category essentially refers to a learner's control of the language, including use of morphology and syntax, for example. I avoided using the term 'grammar' as a way to maintain a low affective filter (see Krashen 30-32) and keep students focused on velocity and production as opposed to structural perfection. This current example represents only three class periods, though it is advisable to allow more time to pass between the distribution of reports. In my experience, the delivery of monthly progress reports, as opposed to weekly progress reports, helps maintain anonymity among classmates, thereby decreasing the possibility that fellow students will know how they were rated and by whom.

Using data from peer evaluations to create progress reports is beneficial for learners and instructors alike. Students know where they stand among their peers at various times during the semester while teachers are able to gauge individual progress by reading, recording, and compiling numerical and qualitative data from peer reviewers. Most importantly, however, collecting data from the Peer Evaluators' rubrics allows the instructor to provide students with timely feedback, a feature that is desirable in any class (Mulder et al. 662), and fundamental for skill-based courses, such as L2 conversation.

According to the research discussed in section two, evaluation of others' work leads to the acquisition of information and enhances learning. With this said, however, keeping track of how often individual learners assume specific roles within the CRGG-C framework can be highly tedious and messy, which is why I introduce Role Control in section six.

Table 2. Sample Progress Report[3]

Name: Angela	Progress Report #1
Use of Vocabulary: The group member successfully uses (or actively tries to use) vocabulary from the chapter. It is obvious that s/he is prepared to participate in the conversation and that s/he is able to use relevant vocabulary successfully	Use of vocabulary from chapter **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5
Pronunciation: The group member attempts to pronounce all of the sounds correctly. Intonation is appropriate and natural. S/he is moving toward target-like ability, as defined by the instructor.	Good pronunciation of sounds **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5
Fluency: The group member speaks without pauses and uses appropriate conversation strategies for this level. S/he stays in the target language all or most of the time. Little to no English is used during the conversation.	Speaks without pauses **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5
Overall Result: Generally speaking, the group member communicates well orally in the target language. S/he is easily understood and messages are generally produced with speed and accuracy, as defined by the instructor.	Overall result **Eval** 1 2 3 4 5
	TOTAL: 12/15

Figure 2: Peer Comments[4]

Here is what your peers have said...

• "Angela uses a lot of relevant vocabulary and you can tell she studies outside of class. Her fluency is noticeably increasing, which is great, but she might considering focusing on her speed a little bit more than she is now."

• "I just had a great conversation with Angela! I think she speaks really well!"

• "I notice a big improvement in her grammar, especially verb conjugations."

• "Angela has a lot of great ideas and I really enjoy working with her."

• "Overall, Angela is very easy to work with; she always participates a lot and shares some great ideas. She might consider working on her pronunciation, though.

Role Control: Keeping Track of Student Responsibilities

Role Control is a chart that can be used by instructors to ensure a fair rotation of responsibilities among learners within the CRGG-C framework. Role Control allows instructors to record "when," "who" and "how" many times each student has served as Peer Evaluator. If we look at table 3, for example, we notice that the chart includes a total of seven students, as seen in the left-hand column. Next to each name, a number of Xs appear, each referring to a specific date on which a student assumed the role of Peer Evaluator. By locating the names on the list, we see that Jon, Thomas, and Andy have served as Peer Evaluators only once during the last three class meetings; yet Sue, Ana, Elizabeth and Roger have all served as Peer Evaluators at least twice in recent classes. Therefore, the instructor or group facilitator knows that Jon, Thomas, and Andy need to enter the rotation as evaluators during the next class meeting in order to provide them with opportunities to assess peers, thereby enhancing their own learning.

Table 3. Sample Role Control[5]

Name: Week 1	9/12	9/14	9/16
Jon		X	
Sue	X		X
Ana	X		X
Thomas		X	
Andy	X		
Elizabeth	X		X
Roger		X	X

Discussion

The different pieces that contribute to the CRGG-C infrastructure (organization of groups, conversation guides, rubrics, progress reports, and role control) help to create both an organized design for class, while also garnering an environment that capitalizes on the benefits of peer review (learning through evaluation). As Peer Evaluators, students have ample opportunities to assess each other's performances and progress throughout the semester. As conversation Leaders and Conversation Contributors, learners have opportunities to practice and test their language skills while simultaneously supporting the language acquisition process of Peer Evaluators: recall that recent research (see section II) suggests that the evaluation of others contributes to one's own academic progress). The piece of the CRGG-C framework that sets it apart from other models is, in my opinion, the addition of the periodic progress reports. Not only do the progress reports allow the teacher to monitor student development objectively, it gives learners the opportunity to better understand how their language is perceived by someone other than themselves or the instructor. In my experience, feedback provided by fellow classmates is often encouraging and supportive, which ultimately boosts confidence and increases motivation. In recent course evaluations, for example, students have commented that they "love getting feedback from peers" and that they find my conversation course to be "well-organized" and "well-taught"; demonstrating their (i.e., learners') positive reactions to the framework.

Students are not the only beneficiaries of the CRGG-C framework, though, as inferred by the discussion in section five. With the implementation of progress reports, there is constant supervision and evaluation of the instructor through the frequent review of rubrics submitted by Peer Evaluators. Furthermore, by consistently recording numerical data available in the rubrics, along with a steady review of Peer Evaluators' comments, instructors have the opportunity to gauge the preparation and development of individual learners. What is more, with the implementation of conversation guides, instructors can indirectly monitor the content of the discourse by allowing Conversation Leaders to facilitate the exchange using questions and/or other materials the instructors select or craft themselves. And finally, through Role Control, instructors can maintain balance among students through the constant rotation of roles and responsibilities, thereby ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities to both evaluate and to be evaluated.

Conclusion

Throughout this work I have reviewed research conducted on the effectiveness of using peer evaluation among learners. In doing so, I have highlighted positive and negative aspects of this type of assessment and pointed to general concerns mentioned in the literature, which primarily suggest that learners' knowledge of, and skill in, a specific area of interest progresses by providing feedback to others; solely receiving it, however, does not. As a result, it is necessary that instructors provide learners with opportunities to evaluate their peers regularly. Such opportunities are built into the CRGG-C infrastructure, as the success of individual learners within this framework

depends on a balanced rotation of all three roles and designated tasks: Conversation Leader (role #1), Conversation Contributor (role #2) and Peer Evaluator (role #3).

The primary objective of this paper has been to outline the parameters of the CRGG-C framework, while also aligning its features with findings highlighted in current peer review research. In so doing, I have demonstrated that the CRGG-C infrastructure is built to capitalize on the positive aspects of peer evaluation, while also addressing some of the concerns discussed in the literature. I have emphasized that, under the CRGG-C framework, distinct responsibilities are placed on each group member, therefore ensuring that every learner serves as an integral part of the conversation. Furthermore, by adhering to the parameters of this framework, all students have the opportunity to evaluate, and to be evaluated, always under the supervision of an instructor or course facilitator. In conclusion, the present work contributes to the ever-growing body of literature centred on the power of peer evaluation among learners, inviting us to continue to rethink pedagogy in higher education, and more specifically, in L2 conversation courses.

Notes

[1] These questions are available in Blanco, José. *Revistas: Conversación Sin Barreras*. Boston: Vista Higher Learning, 2014. See pages 5 and 8. Format has been slightly modified for organizational purposes.

[2] The rubric and scoring procedures were inspired by the definition and explanation provided in Shrum & Glisan (2009, 334) regarding analytic rubrics. The authors suggest that analytic rubrics may include separately rated categories that incorporate "organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics" (334). Although the main purpose of the categories mentioned in Shrum & Glison reflect writing exercises, the rubric shown in Table 1 has been modified to reflect the goals of my L2 conversation course. To my knowledge, there is currently no other rubric that includes the exact same categories or evaluative explanations, nor am I aware of any other model (i.e., other than the CRGG-C framework) that uses follow-up evaluations including progress reports or organizational materials such as 'role 'control', for example (see Table 3).

[3] Created by Massery in 2008.

[4] These sample remarks reflect typical comments and observations provided by peer evaluators. Such remarks are compiled and included in students' progress reports.

[5] I created Role Control in 2012 as way to maintain a constant and fair rotation among students. To my knowledge, the CRGG-C framework is the only peer assessment model that includes this feature.

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