Purpose of Literature Reviews (note: this is an abbreviated literature review):

Generally speaking, the purpose of literature reviews is to provide readers with enough background knowledge of the subject or topic that you will be discussing in order for them to understand the context of your research. Literature reviews normally appear in academic writing, specifically research reports/scholarly articles. Importantly, literature reviews also function as persuasive pieces of writing, where you as the writer *can* and *should* make writing moves to convince readers of your credibility as a researcher and position your argument in a favorable light. Some ways that you could build credibility might include incorporating research from experts in the field on your topic and integrating timely research or research that has been published within an acceptable time frame of use for your discipline. Literature reviews are persuasive in that you can present or position information so as to build a convincing argument.

Potential Writing Moves to Make:

-Write your paragraphs using strong topic sentences and present information that moves from the general to the specific

-Synthesize information by putting scholars in conversation with one another

-Adhere to your style guide's preferred writing conventions (APA, MLA, etc.)

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study will explore the ecology of an advanced college English course, with specific attention to student and professor relationships as they relate to feedback on written assignments, in addition to resources that students and professors use regarding giving and responding to feedback. While the topic of this study is not novel, I take a unique approach by investigating it from a holistic, ecological perspective that endeavors to comprehensively understand the complexities surrounding the writing process. This approach, however, is scantly reflected in the

literature on this topic. That is to say, few scholars have conducted research on this topic and with this population from an ecological writing theory framework (Murray, 1972; Cooper, 1986; Syverson, 1999; Spinuzzi, 2003; Dobrin, 2012). Furthermore, limited research exists on upper-level college students' perceptions of formative writing assessments and their revision processes. Because formative assessment is frequently used in college courses as a pedagogical tool, it is imperative scholars seek to fill this gap in knowledge about college writers and how they interpret and respond to feedback on their written assignments, in addition to the resources they use while revising.

In what follows, I present a review of literature relevant to all writing and feedback-related activities of college students and explore how their relationships with writing, revision, and their interpersonal relationships with their teachers and classmates, inform and influence their approach to writing. I begin by discussing feedback and formative assessment practices as they pertain to written assignments in the field of composition (where much work on this topic has already been accomplished) and other college disciplines. Next, I will review the literature in regards to student and teacher conceptualizations of feedback on written assignments in higher education. Last, I will conclude with literature on revision processes of college students.

Formative Writing Assessment Practices in the Field of Composition

In this section, I will discuss formative writing assessment practices with particular attention to feedback on written assignments at the college level and in the field of composition. The rationale behind selecting assessment literature in the field of composition is because scholars in this field have been involved in utilizing and studying formative assessment for thirty plus years. This should come as no surprise because the academic work required in this discipline is typically writing-related and writing-intensive. The primary mode of formative

Commented [KE3]: This is me showing readers why they should invest their time (and interest) in my paper and project overall.

More specifically, I'm adding to the larger conversation of research related to feedback and revision by taking a new perspective/approach AND I'm contributing to the literature on the topic as well by adding information to this topic.

Commented [KE4]: Summary or overview of what I plan to discuss in the literature. This is an important paragraph to include especially when you are writing a lengthy literature review. Including this overview-esque paragraph helps readers know what they're about to get into and what they should expect to read about and when they will read about it. Again, guide-posting is an important feature of academic writing and becomes all the more necessary when dealing with some of the "big ideas" being discussed in academic writing because it helps anchor and guide the reader.

Commented [KE5]: Ah, a heading! So here it's clear what topic I'll be discussing in this section (formative assessment practices in Composition). Again, this is acting as a guidepost to readers and I'm making good on my promise in the previous paragraph where I said I would begin by discussing feedback and formative assessment practices. By staying true to my word, I not only maintain good organizational practices, but I also demonstrate that I am a trustworthy person/author. One of your goals as a writer is to come across as likeable and reliable—people tend to like that and your audience expects this in academic writing.

On another note, headings can be tricky to write, so some things to consider when writing headings, or coming up with heading titles should include how they address or relate to the topic you are discussing. If it's misleading or confusing to readers in any way, then you'll want to revise it for clarity and accuracy purposes. Titles/headings can also use active language to not only state what the topic is, but why it is meaningful, or in what capacity it will be discussed. This title is not a great example of this, but the following title/header is.

assessment in this discipline is feedback on written assignments. Thus, studies in composition have made much progress on understanding the little-known art of providing feedback to students, in addition to offering up best practices when giving feedback.

While different aspects of and methodological approaches to studying feedback and assessment are reviewed within this larger context, all of the studies are bound by some tacit assumptions and approaches toward writing instruction and feedback. Some of the beliefs underpinning writing that all of the researchers from this body of literature share is that writing is a social endeavor, especially feedback in writing. The social theories of Lev Vygotsky (1978) are oft-cited in the theoretical framework sections of these eight studies, as is the framework of social constructivism, which is most often seen through their methodological and analytical approaches to the subject(s) of study (Unrau & Alvermann, 2013). The works of Bakhtin (1986) are also called upon, because as indicated by this section's title, there is a movement within this field to associate feedback with the concept and qualities of a conversation. Other important beliefs that are shared by practitioners and scholars in this field are that writing is a process, revision is recursive, and both writing and feedback are highly contextualized through often rhetorical means (Fitzgerald & Ianetta, 2016; Wardle & Downs, 2020). My goal for this section is to emphasize the evolution of the concept that writing is conversational and relational. To that end, this section of the literature review follows in mostly a chronological order to showcase this progression.

Burgeoning Conceptualizations that Providing Effective Feedback to Students is Complex

The literature in this section is composed of studies from the field of composition on the subject of language use and types of comments provided by faculty to students as feedback on their written assignments (Smith, 1997; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 2000). Sommers' (1982)

research was one of the first of its kind to study comments provided by teachers. Her study sought to explore the kinds of messages teachers give their students through their comments and what factors determine which of these comments the students choose to use or to ignore when revising (Sommers, 1982). She reviewed students' papers with teachers' comments from composition classes at two, four-year universities and had two major findings: (1) teachers appropriate the student's text by making comments that do not align with the student's purposes for writing or phase of the writing process, thus confusing students and causing them to lose motivation to write; and (2) most teachers' comments are not specific and could be "rubber-stamped" across papers (Sommers, 1982, p. 152). These findings are significant because this marks the first time in this body of literature that an empirical study has identified these issues with feedback *and* they have pedagogical implications as well. Here, Sommers (1982) calls attention to the language of the comments and posits students' abilities to interpret and apply the feedback, which is the focus of the next study.

  Summer Smith's (1997) study, "The Genre of the End Comment: Conventions in Teacher Responses to Student Writing", was concerned with identifying a type of written feedback to students known as the end comment—an extended commentary of the student's paper written by the teacher at the end of the paper—as a genre. Smith (1997) conducted a corpus review of teachers' end comments on students' composition papers from two data sources—Penn State's first year Composition and Rhetoric course from 1993, and end comments from Connor and Lundsford's (1993 as cited in Smith, 1997) national study of college level feedback. She categorized the language of the end comments into three main categories of feedback types: judging, reader-response, and coaching (Smith, 1997). From this, she was then able to see when they occurred in end comments, and discovered that these kinds of comments occurred in a

similar pattern (positive comments-negative comments-positive comments) in most end comments, thus qualifying them as genres (Smith, 1997). Her key pedagogical implications are that end comments are formulaic and stable, thus they are genres, and as a result, their educational effectiveness is actually reduced because of their predictability (Smith, 1997). She advised that teachers refrain from writing their end comments in that order, or at least refrain from using sentence fragments and predictable phrasings particularly within that order (Smith, 1997). Smith's (1997) study dovetails well into the next study because they share a similar focus with regards to analyzing and classifying teachers' commenting styles.

Richard Straub's (2000) study, investigated his own classroom-based feedback practices within a first-year college writing context at a four-year university. Straub's (2000) data was gathered from a composition class he taught several years earlier and consisted of ten student essays (this included drafts) with his comments, excerpts from his syllabus, and writing assignment prompts. His study resulted in seven findings which are as follows: comments should resemble conversation; teachers should not appropriate the student's texts; when commenting, give priority to global concerns (content, context, organization and purpose); limit the scope of your comments and amount of comments per text; comments should be contextualized to the stage of drafting and development of the text; comments should be personalized to the student that you're giving feedback to; and frequently praise students (Straub, 2000). This collection of "best practices" is particularly helpful to faculty because this information was written in an accessible manner and contained practical examples of how to provide feedback to students rather than simply becoming aware of what not to do when giving feedback.

It is at this point in the literature review that the focus on feedback shifts a bit. What the composition field has established thus far is that there are different types of feedback, the purposes for the different types of feedback vary, and that there is a general sense of what constitutes "good" feedback (Sommers, 1982; Smith, 1997; Straub, 2000). The biggest takeaway from these studies at this point is that researchers in the field of composition are starting to document that a conversation between students and teachers is happening, these conversations have important pedagogical implications, and they are striving to make this conversation more effective. As such, the focal participants in the upcoming studies shift from that of only teachers to students, thus allowing for a more holistic representation of the conversation about feedback and assessment.

Considerations of Modes as a Way for Teachers to Improve Feedback to Students

This next set of studies extends the conversation of feedback and assessment to consider the mode in which it is delivered (Bilbro & Clark, 2013; Kim, 2004). Both Kim (2004) and Bilbro & Clark's (2013) studies examined first year college students' perceptions of written and voice-recorded feedback provided by teachers in a composition context. Kim's (2004) study was novel in that few studies at that time focused on effectiveness of feedback in other modes besides writing. The teacher participants were assigned essays and asked to provide audio and written comments on them (Kim, 2004). Then, the student participants read three essays each (an essay with written comments, an essay with audio comments, and the last essay contained the mode of feedback of their choosing) (Kim, 2004). After reading or listening to the comments for each essay, students were prompted to complete a questionnaire asking affective questions about the mode of response (Kim, 2004). Kim's (2004) findings were significant because they indicated that the mode of feedback is a secondary concern to students; the ways in which teachers

comment, and the relationship that exists between teachers and students matter more. Following this logic, she concluded "the individual persona emerges and figures prominently in the quality of student-teacher interaction taking place" (p. 330) suggesting there is no substitute for face-to-face interaction and that teachers who are teaching digitally-based courses should consider ways to convey their persona and style while teaching and to reflect their persona in online comments to ensure consistent, effective pedagogy (Kim, 2004). The next study also compares students' perceptions of different modes of feedback.

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In conclusion, this literature review explored the ways in which feedback on written assignments is given in a higher education context. Important takeaways from the literature on feedback include: (1) feedback is highly contextualized, (2) feedback should be dialogic, (3) communication between givers and receivers of feedback should be clear, (4) opportunities for revision are integral both for learning content and developing writing and thinking skills, and (5) students' and faculty' perceptions of and experiences with feedback greatly impact its usage and effectiveness. The literature on feedback in a higher education context significantly influenced my research questions and provided me with valuable information necessary to investigating this complex and nuanced pedagogical practice.

Commented [KE11]: This is the final conclusion of the literature review. The writing moves here are pretty similar to the ones made in the last paragraph of the previous section. Here though, I thought it would be more helpful to the reader to kind of "pull back" and give a big picture perspective of the key points or takeaways of the literature review, and I did so by numbering them for ease of reading. In order to get these 5 points, I had to do some synthesizing, which as you know by now is a major writing/thinking task when writing a literature review. Importantly, I also add (in the last sentence) the connection I see between these key points in the literature review and my own research. You will want to make connections such as these as much as you can when appropriate because again, it helps readers see these connections as well.