Improving Student Writing with Peer Review

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Improving Writing with Peer Review

1. Goals and Common Challenges
2. One Approach
3. Planning Peer Review
4. Organizing and Guiding a Peer-Review Session
5. Evaluating Peer Review
Common Challenges: Student Responses
One Approach

1. **Teach** the required skills
2. Teach peer review as an essential part of the writing process and a means of learning to write for readers
3. Define peer-reviewers as READERS, not graders
Teach Peer Review as Part of the Writing Process

Peer Review

Drafting ➔ Revising ➔ Editing

The Teaching Center, Washington University
Plan: When and with what purposes?

Design Peer-Review Worksheets

Schedule Practice Session

Organize and Facilitate each Session

Evaluate and Refine
Plan Peer Review

1. Decide before the semester starts
   - How often; which assignments
   - To grade or not to grade?
     - Plan to give feedback, whether grading or not

2. Allow time for a practice peer-review session with a sample student paper
   - All students write comments, then discuss
     - What kind of comments are most helpful to writer?
     - How might writer respond?
Design Peer-Review Worksheets

1. Include specific tasks and open-ended questions

2. Include space for writer to add notes/responses
Organize each Session

1. Assign 2-3 students per group
   - Create diverse groups
2. Ask each student to bring 2 copies of paper
3. Distribute worksheets
4. Provide clear instructions and time limits, for example (for each 3-pg. paper):
   - 15-20 minutes reading
   - 5-10 minutes commenting
   - 5-10 minute discussing
Observe and Facilitate

1. Encourage students
2. Help groups stay on task and on schedule
3. If a group does not know how to start discussing, suggest that they read written comments out loud
Evaluate Peer Review

1. Ask each writer to turn in peer-review worksheets and reviewed draft with final draft
2. Gather feedback and suggestions from students on how peer-review sessions are going
For Additional Ideas

Handouts will be posted on the ITeach Web site after the symposium.

Go to [http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu](http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu) to register for upcoming faculty workshop:

**Teaching with Writing**
Wed., Feb. 3 and 10
4:00-6:00 pm
Eads 217
Enrollment limited to 12
Sample Writer’s Responses or Notes

- I need to add more support for this point.
- How can I respond to a counter-argument here?
- My reviewers didn’t understand the importance of my research question. I need to rewrite that section.
- My reviewers thought this paragraph was not important, but it is actually essential. How can I better connect it?
- One reviewer thought I should omit this example, but the other two liked it. I will keep it, but think about whether I need to clarify it.
Preparing: Develop a Grading System

One example, using points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a writer, brought 2 copies of paper to class</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As peer-reviewer, provided peers with specific, constructive written feedback</td>
<td>0-5 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As peer-reviewer, participated actively in discussion</td>
<td>0-5 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a writer, wrote specific responses to peer feedback</td>
<td>0-5 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total points for peer review session</td>
<td>0-20 pts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>