

Making Peer Review Work for You and Your Students

A Sound (Teaching) Bite from the Writing in the Disciplines Program

Why Peer Review?

Peer review means any activity that gets students sharing their work with each other in order to give and receive feedback. Peer review can occur in class or out; it can occur in pairs or in larger groups; it can occur over full drafts or short segments of longer texts; it can occur when drafts are fully developed or when work is in an early stage. Peer review offers advantages for students and faculty.

Students

- Get a thoughtful response to their work and get to engage peers in conversation
- Can learn from choices their peers make
- Can clarify their understanding of the assignment
- Develop critiquing and editing skills

Teachers

- Model thinking about work in progress
- Provide a chance to understand expectations
- Encourage students to understand *revision*

Peer Review Requires Teaching

Peer review won't work unless you provide a structure that teaches students *how to give good feedback*. You can

- Guide what gets considered in the review
 - Via a response form, or a classroom conversation about criteria
- Teach students what roles to play as reviewers (Editors? Coaches? Skeptics?)
- Define the format for response; define the timeframe for response
- Demonstrate that you value reviews
 - By collecting the reviews with the papers
 - By checking that reviews are completed
 - Share good reviews; share sample reviews before students do them
 - By giving grades/credit for reviews
- Ask students to write a short reflection on what they learned from giving/receiving feedback
 - Respond to that as you grade