Effective Feedback Series
PART 2: Strategies for Facilitating Peer Feedback

While instructor feedback is important, peer feedback can sometimes be more helpful for students in that students can relate to each other's perspectives and speak on each other's level in a way instructors can't (Cho & MacArthur, 2010). However, peer response is primarily recommended in conjunction with self and/or instructor feedback (Dochy et al., 1999). Peer feedback is most effective when there is a specific structure to it, when writers receive feedback from multiple peers (Cho & Schunn, 2007), and when they have adequate time to implement it (Ambrose et al., 2010). Research has also demonstrated that simply engaging in the process of providing feedback to peers can improve a student's own writing, particularly for English Language Learners (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

Strategies	Teaching Suggestions
Provide a rubric that students can use to guide their feedback.	To prepare students to comment on one another's work, provide a rubric or feedback sheet. Practice providing feedback together in class to ensure students know what constitutes constructive feedback. You can access a sample structure for peer feedback here.
Acknowledge that students may hold negative perspectives of peer review.	Research has demonstrated that students often feel negatively about engaging in peer review (Mulder, Pearce, & Baik, 2014; Kaufmann & Schunn, 2011; Brammer & Rees; 2007). To mitigate this, you can monitor students' feedback to one another and award participation credit for it. This will encourage accountability.
Be cautious in awarding grades based on peer feedback.	Dancer & Dancer (1992) found that peers are prone to rate one another based on uniformity, race, and friendship if not properly trained. Students also tend to feel more negatively toward peer review when students are put in charge of each other's grades (Kaufmann & Schunn, 2011; Kaufmann; Schunn, & Charney, 2006). In addition, agreement between peer and instructor feedback has varied a great deal among studies (Oldfield & Macalpine, 1995; Orsmond et al., 1996).

To review, formative feedback is critical to student learning and in order to be effective it should be focused on learning outcomes, forward looking to subsequent assignments, and provided when it's most useful in a timely manner. Peer feedback can supplement instructor feedback, but should always be clearly structured and practiced in conjunction with instructor feedback. Finally, when students assess themselves they can build increased engagement with course material, transfer skills from one learning context to another, and develop the skills necessary to be self-directed, lifelong learners.

Sample Peer Response Activity (adapted from Ambrose et al., 2010)
Please read the paper through the first time without making any markings on it in order to familiarize yourself with the paper.

I.   During the second read, please do the following:
   - Underline the main argument of the paper.
   - Put a checkmark in the left column next to pieces of evidence that support the argument.
   - Circle the conclusion.
II. Once you have done this, read the paper for the third and final time, and respond briefly to the following questions:
   - Does the first paragraph present the writer's argument and the approach the writer is taking in presenting that argument? If not, which piece is missing, unclear, understated, and so forth?

- Does the argument progress clearly from one paragraph to the next (for example, is the sequencing/organization logical)? Does each paragraph add to the argument (that is, link the evidence to the main purpose of the paper)? If so, please provide an example to illustrate how they do so. If not, where does the structure break down, and/or which paragraph is problematic and why?
- Does the writer support the argument with evidence? Please indicate where there is a paragraph strong with evidence, weak on evidence, evidence not supporting the argument, and so on.
- Does the conclusion draw together the strands of the argument? If not, what is missing?
- What is the best part of the paper?
- Which area(s) of the paper needs most improvement (e.g., the argument, the organization, sentence structure or word choice, evidence)? Be specific so that the writer knows where to focus his or her energy.

Citation

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