Peer Review Strategies

Jacqui McIsaac, PhD
Writing Specialist
Writing Services, Learning and Curriculum Support
Two considerations for feedback

Facilitative approach

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Organized structure

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Valuable Feedback
Learn from your peers

• Critical thinking through collaboration and dialogue
• Students learn in the process of articulating their ideas to others
• When students draw from other peoples’ approaches, they add to their own repertoire of learning strategies (Boud et al., 2001)
Improve WRITING SKILLS and CRITICAL THINKING through the peer review process

*Strengthens your ability to...*

- diagnose others’ writing challenges
- revise your own writing
Facilitative Feedback
Have a conversation with the text

Facilitative

- Clarity, organization, logic, coherence
- Provide questions or comments for the author to consider
- Share your experience as a reader

Examples

- “When I read ____, I thought you meant ____”
- “Can you provide another example?”
- “Can you add more detail?”
- “I think you said something similar earlier. Is this different?”
Have a conversation with the text

Directive and Corrective

• Formatting, grammar, spelling
• Simple items for the author to fix
• Less important and engaged than facilitative comments

Examples

• “Double check APA format for websites”
• “Some of your sentences are run-on sentences. Watch out for too many commas.”
• “The abstract can’t be longer than 300 words”
Guiding Principles

1. Be specific
2. Be constructive
3. Provide explanations
Structuring your Feedback
Take a three-step structure to providing feedback

**STEP 1:** Overview of the paper’s strengths

**STEP 2:** Suggestions for Improvement

**STEP 3:** Advice for Corrections
Reading Strategies

• Higher-Order Concerns
  (The “Big” Picture)
  • Thesis / Purpose
  • Support / Evidence for arguments
  • Structure / Organization of ideas, paragraphs
Reading Strategies

• Lower-Order Concerns
  (Details, details, details ... )
  
  • Sentence structure
  • Grammar / Spelling
STEP 1: The Paper’s Strengths

• The first rule to peer editing is to BE CONSTRUCTIVE

• Remember, you are helping to change someone’s work. Consider the tone of your commentary and make specific but practical suggestions. Understand this is a working draft and offer your advice accordingly.

• Comments are about the PAPER, not the AUTHOR or the PERSON.
Pointing out the strengths

Always start with what you think are the paper’s **STRENGTHS**:

![Wrong]

“Good job!”

**Not so helpful:** Suggests that the editor doesn’t want to offend his or her fellow student or doesn’t understand what he or she should be looking at.

![Correct]

**Helpful:** Address specifically what makes the paper good

Examples:

- You do __________ very well in your writing...
- These examples are excellent because...
- I think this section really works because...
- This is interesting because...
- I like the way you...
Kinds of Positive Comments

**Address:**

- Structure
- Argumentative evaluations
- Tone of language
- Writing style
- Clarity of issues
- Originality of topic
- Relevance of supporting evidence
- Direction of investigation (logical, focused?)
STEP 2: Suggestions for Improvement

• Be **specific** in your comments
• Make your comments from the point of **view of a reader**
• Try to phrase your comments as **questions** you want the author to answer
• **Show** the author where he or she needs to further explain an idea, develop their explanation, provide more evidence...
Providing Feedback

Use **positive** language
(say “do...” rather than “don’t...”)

NEGATIVE → “You don’t provide evidence to support this point.”

POSITIVE → “Can you provide a good example here to illustrate this point?”
Providing Feedback

Make your suggestions **specific**

- **“awkward”** → editor hasn’t explained what the problem with the sentence is OR suggested how to correct it

- **MORE CLEAR** → “Can you word this another way? I wasn’t able to follow this idea”

- **Word/phrase is circled** → editor hasn’t indicated whether the problem is the spelling or word choice

- **MORE CLEAR** → “check spelling” or “might be too informal—try a different word”
Providing Feedback

Make your suggestions respectful

✗ “This doesn’t make sense”

✓ “This part isn’t clear to me. Could you break your ideas down a bit more?”

✗ Wording is repetitive

✓ “Repeated words are distracting. You might want to revise here.”
Kinds of Valuable Feedback

First, focus on the overall paper...

Address:
• Thesis (is it clear, specific, arguable?)
• Topic (focused or too general?)
• Structure (does it progress logically)
• Counter Arguments (are they addressed?)
• Organization (order and flow – logical?)
• Details or evidence (relevant?)
• Analysis (is it thorough and convincing?)
Kinds of Valuable Feedback

*Second, focus on the language and tone...*

- Word choice (appropriate and academic?)
- Sentences (concise and grammatically correct?)
- Awkward or colloquial phrases
STEP 3: Corrections

• Do not correct, but advise for corrections to:
  • Incomplete or run-on sentences
  • Grammar
  • Punctuation
  • Spelling
REMEMBER...

• Be constructive – Help the writer build on what they have by offering useful suggestions in a positive way
• Be specific
• Provide suggestions (and maybe compliments if they’re not too fluffy)