The Effectiveness of Peer Review in Advanced ESL Composition Classrooms

Peer review:

- Definition.
- The benefits of peer review.
- Ten guidelines for effective Peer Review:
  1. Integrate Peer Review throughout the course.
  2. Create a comfortable atmosphere.
  3. Model effective peer review.
  4. Inform students of the benefits of peer review.
  5. Use teacher response and peer response in separate drafts.
  6. Assign appropriate peer review groups.
  7. Provide students with guided peer response forms.
  8. Monitor peer review sessions.
  9. Remind students they are the final decision makers.
 10. Follow up with peer review sessions.

What do expert teachers think about Peer Review?

- Nina Rosen (Santa Rosa Junior college ESL instructor) “Peer review is probably more effective in upper level writing classes where students have greater mastery of critical thinking skills to serve them when they approach error analysis.”

- Helen Kallenbach (Sonoma State American Language Institute director) “Peer Review is useful at high- intermediate and advanced levels. The first couple of times I include formatting questions...then the second set is usually related to the focus of the writing assignment...I ask the reviewer if there is anything they would like to learn more about..finally, I ask them what they liked best about the paper.”
What do Advanced ESL composition students think of peer review?

- “Peer review is a really good way to improve our writing because you get ideas and opinions about the writing that can help improve it.”
- “Peer review is a new experience for me and it’s helpful.”
- “People seeing my paper helps me write a better summary.”
- “Peer review helps me get new ideas to include in my writing.”

Thank you to my mentor teacher, Nina Rosen and my graduate advisor, Prof. May Shih, for supporting this project! Feel free to email me at the e-mail address listed on the front side of this handout if you would like to see more sample materials or have any questions about peer review.

References


Sample peer review questionnaire

Part I. The questions in this section relate specifically to the peer review lesson taught by Jennifer.

1. When revising your summary, did you take some or all of your peer’s comments into consideration?

2. If you did not take your peer’s comments into consideration, why didn’t you?

Part II. General questions

1. Have you used peer review in previous classes? If so, approximately how many times?

2. Do you find peer review useful? Why or why not? Please explain.

3. Please feel free to make any other general comments about peer review here:
Peer review form

Please be as helpful and constructive as possible when filling out this form. The purpose of this form is to help your partner become a better writer. Please make your suggestions as specific as possible, referring to specific parts of your partner’s paper. Read the summary through once, and then answer the following questions and remember to be constructive, but nice!

1. Write the topic sentence of the summary here:
   
   A) Does the topic sentence include the title in quotation marks? Yes ___ No___
   B) Does it include the main point of the essay? Yes___ No___
   C) Is your peer’s main point the same as your main point? If not, how are they different?

2. Does the summary include any personal opinion? If so, indicate here:

3. Is there any shift in verb tense? (From the historical present to the past (“he/she says”, “he/she said”) Make a note here or on your peer’s paper if you see a verb tense error.

4. How is the organization of the paper? Is there an introduction, body and conclusion? Is the thesis clear? If not, explain how these parts could be improved.

5. Write the concluding sentence here. Does it sum up the main point of the story?

6. What parts of the paper need more or less information to help the reader better understand the summary? Please indicate here or on your peer’s paper.

7. What did you like best about your peer’s summary? Give examples.

(Adapted from Nina Rosen’s and Ferris & Hedgcock’s (2005) peer review form, created by Jennifer Cantacuzène.)