

PEER REVIEW AND THE WRITER: TEACHING STUDENTS AGENCY

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For many years, when I asked my students to respond anonymously about elements of my writing assignments, including peer review, I frequently received comments like: “peer review is a waste of time;” “I didn’t like when we did peer review because the only opinion that really matters is yours;” and “Most of the people in this class don’t know much about writing, so I don’t think getting their opinion on my papers is very useful.” Researchers like Julia H. Kaufman and Christian D. Schunn, as well as Megan L. Titus, report that perspectives like these are typical as students are skeptical of peer feedback because they suspect it will be inadequate (Kaufman and Schunn 401, Titus 12). Yet, while students are generally correct in their belief that instructors know more about writing than peers and their desire to receive expert and authoritative feedback is a reasonable outgrowth of the hierarchical education system they are participating in, peer feedback is essential to improve the effectiveness of the writing we all do.

One aspect of our work is to teach students to develop and trust independent resources rather than foster a dependence on instructors or other authorities. Real world writing contexts rarely provide a supervisor who will vet each writing task or provide a response to every draft. Instead, our job includes helping students understand that feedback about their writing will come most often from peers, whether they are crafting an accident report as a police officer, a brief as a paralegal, an email as a contractor, or texts sent to colleagues in any field. In fact, to get any feedback at all, they will often have to take the initiative to ask for it. As scholars like Deborah Dean and Chris M. Anson assert, strategic writing instruction simultaneously encourages students to pay heed to the particular objectives of a

specific writing assignment, and it equips them with future oriented skills, processes, and habits (Dean 82, Anson 73). We can meet these goals if we use peer review to teach students to ask for the kinds of feedback that are most helpful to them or—to employ Benjamin Keating’s terms—to help build bridges between school-sponsored peer review and self-sponsored peer review (57). In this article I present classroom strategies for teaching peer review with an emphasis on empowering students to seek the kind of feedback that they will benefit from the most. This article describes an approach to peer review that not only helps students to improve the writing assignment at hand, but it also develops a transferable skill they can employ in other educational and professional contexts.

My approach to peer review has changed immensely over the twenty-one years I have been teaching English with a career trajectory that has taken me from a state university to a middle school to a community college and now to private university. The students I currently work with at Elon University generally come directly from high school to college. Elon University accepts about 60% of applicants and enrolls about 6200 undergraduates, 20% of which self-define as coming from ethnically diverse backgrounds. The class size for my first-year writing courses is 20 students. Only about 12% of each entering class, generally those students with abilities honed in AP courses, test out of first-year writing. The purpose of the class is to help writers new to college succeed in any discipline or program by learning to analyze the demands of different genres of writing, the different ways of employing research in writing, and to be intentional about addressing the expectations of different audiences. I also use this peer review process in literature courses with enrollments of 20-33 students.

Composition scholars including Peter Elbow (1973), Maxine Hairston (1982), Kenneth Brufee (1984), John R. Hayes (1996), Joseph Harris (2003), Paul Prior (2006), and Megan L. Titus (2017) among others, have investigated different dimensions of writing development and the ways peer review activities impact a writer’s process. Steve Graham and Dolores Perin’s (2007) and Mariëtte Hoogeveen and Amos van Gelderen’s (2013) meta-analyses of research into peer

review have verified the value of peer review in a variety of classroom contexts. Furthermore, many educators have developed strong templates for instructing writers about how to be thoughtful peer reviewers including Donald Murray (1985), Donald H. Graves (1994), Richard Straub (1997), and in an article particularly well-suited for developing classroom peer revisions practices, Jay Simmons (2003). These arguments showcase the importance of focusing peer reviewers on global revisions, organization, and a set of clear objectives specific to the assignment rather than allowing peer reviewers to focus on making sentence level corrections and engage in surface level polishing.

Yet student resistance to employing peer review practices remains strong, and even the most thoughtful peer responses aren't useful to writers who don't utilize them. Consequently, I argue one overlooked element in the pedagogy of peer review is the opportunity to teach students to analyze and articulate their own needs and desires as a writer. Dana Lynn Driscoll and Jennifer Wells's work on the ways dispositions, including self-efficacy, enable students to apply and transfer skills demonstrates the import of developing writing practices that forefront student agency. Similarly, Titus's case study of one instructor's practices notes "a connection between revision, peer feedback, and agency" (22). My own experience with this process suggests that a student who communicates to their peer reviewers the kind of critique and recommendations they want is more likely to get useful feedback and more likely to employ it as they make revisions.

I teach this kind of peer review in three steps. The process is time consuming, but investing in this stage of the writing process pays off. Peter Rollinson's work confirms that "pretraining" students to do peer review increases its efficacy (27); similarly, Charlotte Brammer and Mary Rees demonstrate that students who receive more preparation about how to peer review value peer revision more (77). The first step introduces students to different types of peer review feedback; this step occurs only once for each course. The second and third steps are in-class peer review workshops and are, ideally, repeated several times during a course as part of the scaffolded

structure of each writing assignment. For me, this is generally three times during a semester. As Adam Loretto, Sara DeMartino, and Amanda Godley have shown, students learn to trust their peer reviewers as they grow more comfortable and experienced with peer review (150). Although this approach to peer review requires more class time than some methods, the strategies it employs ultimately benefit both students and instructors.

Step One: Classifying Feedback and Teaching Writers to Identify Their Preferences

In order to help my students get the most out of small-group peer revision sessions, I emphasize not just the opportunity but a responsibility for each group member to articulate and explain their own needs and desires as a writer. In this approach to peer review, students learn to identify different types of feedback and to evaluate their openness to each form of feedback by looking briefly at the work of Rebecca L. Lipstein and K. Ann Renninger. In an eight-page article, these two scholars “offer characteristics of students in four phases of interest and describe instructional approaches to meet students’ wants and identify four types of writers and four corresponding types of feedback” (79). Although Lipstein and Renninger’s work is based on a study of 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students, the four categories they develop are easily applied to writers at the high school and college level as well. The brevity and clarity of Lipstein and Renninger’s research make it a particularly appealing piece of scholarship to share with students. It is easy for me to present and summarize in classes when I am pressed for time, or I can assign it to students to read for themselves.

Students often enjoy deciding what “phase” of writer they are according to the Lipstein and Renninger model or in positing other phases that better capture their attitudes; it isn’t quite as much fun as deciding if someone is a Gryffindor or Hufflepuff, but the article plays into the same impulse to categorize. It also creates a shared vocabulary that allows students to talk to each other with specificity and clarity about different types of feedback. The four types of

feedback I describe here are deeply indebted to the four “phases” of writerly interest articulated by Lipstein and Renninger (80). Whereas Lipstein and Renninger focus on the level of interest students hold toward the task of writing and how to help instructors customize their feedback (83), I focus on how to teach students to apply the insights of these scholars in order *to ask* for the kind of feedback they will benefit from the most. A handout adapting and expanding the research of Lipstein and Renninger for students and describing the four styles of feedback associated with each type of writer is available in Figure 1. I use this handout when we first discuss peer review, and we refer to it in later peer review sessions.

Helping students to shift from an understanding of peer review as a process of correction to understanding it as a process for gathering feedback is essential, and for many students it is a shift that occurs only with practice. And in order to begin, students first need to reach a consensus about what kinds of feedback are desirable. In my classes usually 50% of students have some previous experience with peer review, but the other half have never participated in any formal version of the process before. Some students are self-conscious about their grammar proficiency and are relieved to learn that adding commas or apostrophes is not the purpose of peer review. We talk about reading another writer’s work with two clear questions in mind: how is this piece meeting or missing the objectives of the assignment and how effectively is the writer communicating their ideas? From there, we talk about how each of these two questions leads to smaller ones that are dependent on the specifics of the assignment and the goals of the writer. All of this takes time. Producing efficient writing, I warn my students, is rarely an efficient process. Good writing hides its own effort—the drafts and developments the writer makes to transform murky ideas or arguments into clear and exciting prose are invisible to the reader.

Discussing these four types of feedback often inspires students to come up with additional types of peer response that they appreciate, usually specific to the objectives of a particular writing assignment. They might involve comments on the ways sources have been integrated, consideration of how and when the audience for a particular

These feedback or response styles are designed to support four kinds of writers. Keep in mind that many writers prefer different kinds of response for different writing projects, depending on their level of confidence with the assignment and their goals for a specific piece of writing.

Type A: Directive Response supports writers who want concrete suggestions about what revision steps to take.

Type B: Questions as Response guide writers who want to analyze for themselves what revisions to make in order to resolve the problems a reader spotted in their work.

Type C: Affective Response focuses on writers who want to know how a reader is affected by the work in order to make adjustments that will help the writer achieve the affect or impression they intended while still preserving their own sense of style or voice.

Type D: Challenging Response inspires writers who like to be tested and want to strengthen both the content and style of their work. They welcome new ideas and approaches.

These sample phrasings can help peer reviewers express their comments in ways that are helpful for writers preferring each style of feedback:

Type A: Directive Response

- This section needs more attention to . . .
- Move this sentence to . . .
- Build a fuller transition here as you shift from one paragraph to the next.
- Add at least two more examples and cite a new source.

Type B: Questions as Response

- Where is the example to support this claim?
- Why have you placed this quotation at the end of the paragraph instead of earlier?
- Did you want me to find this example more persuasive than the previous one?
- Should this argument come later in the paper?

Type C: Affective Response

- I am confused by . . .
- I wanted more examples of . . .
- Here I feel as if you are repeating ideas from the introduction, and I don't know why.
- This quotation makes me think about . . .

Type D: Challenging Response

- Think about the order of these arguments. You may not have the most logical sequence for these claims yet.
- Find a wider range of sources to extend your argument.
- Experiment with shorter sentences to change the pace of your paper.
- Design two graphs to illustrate the data you discuss.

Figure 1: Types of Feedback Derived from the Work of Lipstein and Renninger

piece of writing is referenced and acknowledged within the work, or how material from a previous reading or class discussion could be

leveraged within the writing assignment to showcase the writer's command of course material.

Our class discussion also notes other factors that influence how useful each writer finds different sorts of feedback. For example, we explore the value of praise and “mitigating” language as discussed by Kwangsu Cho, Christian D. Schunn, and Davida Charney. Some writers begrudge the comments of peer reviewers if they are perceived as unrelentingly critical. Other writers are frustrated by praise as it strikes them as unhelpful when they *want* to hear what needs improvement. Whereas one student in my current course, Haley, explains she likes peer response to begin with a compliment, Lauren says she likes encouraging words scattered throughout the feedback even if only to commend a small feature—a lively verb or well-selected quotation. Again, a writer's ability to recognize their own need (or lack of need) for supportive feedback enables them to articulate their expectations to their peer review group.

Using class discussion to identify and articulate the types of feedback each student most appreciates and the variations in feedback the specific assignment calls for has several important outcomes:

- Teaching students to organize feedback into at least four types.
- Inviting students to see revision and writing improvement as a process that can be individualized for every writer depending on the writer's needs and preferences.
- Shifting the role of the writer in peer review from that of a passive recipient of feedback to that of a strategic agent seeking advice on what will be most fruitful to them personally.
- Encouraging students to see the writing process, including peer review, as a practice built on research that they can take advantage of to improve their own writing and their own participation in writing communities.

Dedicating a class period to prepare for peer review empowers students to be their own advocates. Students realize that they cannot expect

peer reviewers to intuit what kind of feedback will be helpful or appreciated; the responsibility of articulating what would be “useful” peer review now lies with the writer of the work.

Step Two: The Writer Prepares Their Peer Review Group

Of course, teaching students to approach peer review strategically also includes more than a little strategy on the instructor’s part as well. Just as student writers have a responsibility to set up conditions conducive to generating useful peer responses, teachers need to prepare the preconditions necessary for a successful peer review workshop. These preconditions include deciding how work will be shared, the size and composition of peer review groups, and how to handle a student who arrives unprepared. Some models require students to grant their peers access to electronic copies or have writers read their work aloud to a peer group. Researchers have studied how the context and environment of peer revision affects the success of the process. Ineke Van den Berg, Wilfried Admiraal, and Albert Pilot have suggested small assessment groups of three to four students working face-to-face rather than online leads to a better revision experience. Mary E. Styslinger notes a gender dynamic at work in peer revision. Her research shows male students make fewer verbal and written feedback suggestions when working in gender homogenous groups (53). Her observational work implies that employing mixed gender peer revision groups is desirable whenever possible. I prefer to have writers work in groups of four selected by me to make sure there is a variety of students in each group. I have students exchange printed copies of their work—even though this means students must bring four copies of their draft to class (three to give to peer reviewers and one to give to me). Instructors will need to experiment with some of these conditions to decide what works best with the assignment being peer reviewed or the resources available to their students.

Once peer groups are arranged, I use the first peer review session (approximately 70 minutes) to emphasize the writer’s role in the peer

review process. The first session begins with each student spending ten minutes composing a memo to accompany the copy of the draft they will hand in to me. The memo serves both as information for me and as a strategy to get them re-engrossed in their own writing before they communicate this same information orally to their peers during the peer review workshop. In the memo the writer identifies what kind of feedback they would find most beneficial based on the types outlined in our previous class discussion. We sometimes articulate other types of feedback specific to the assignment. For example, in a class studying a Shakespeare play, we read an interview with an actor explaining the questions she asks herself as she shapes her interpretation of a role. The writing assignment asks students to analyze a character of their own choosing using the approach discussed in the interview. In our class discussion of types of feedback, students suggested a “Type E: Comparison Response” that would focus peer response on the ways the draft could be revised to better match the features in the assigned model. Their suggestions for this assignment-specific form of feedback appear in Figure 2.

Requiring writers to articulate one preferred type of feedback in the memo forces students to be conscious of what benefits them the most and to be respectful of the time and effort of their peers. Asking for “any kind of feedback” or “all kinds” isn’t allowed—although it is a temptation we talk about. However, on examination, most students agree that no one has enough time to offer four or more distinct kinds of feedback on each paper and that as writers, realistically, we don’t want to have so many varieties of feedback to wade through from multiple readers. As Adam Loretto, Sara DeMartino, and Amanda Godley have noted, conflicting advice from multiple reviewers can be frustrating (155); and while complete uniformity in feedback is neither possible nor even desirable, strategies that focus all peer reviewers in the same direction help the writer figure out the best places to revise. I do allow students to ask for one kind of feedback from the instructor and another kind from members of the peer review group if they wish, but I do not recommend the practice.

Over the years I’ve worked to refine this form of peer review, I’ve noted some patterns among the requests my students make in

Type E: Comparison Response focuses on direct parallels between an assigned reading used as a model and the writer's paper.

Sample Phrasings for Feedback:

- The quotation used here is very long. Compare the length of your quotations to the ones used in the article.
- The model uses several brief quotations in every paragraph. Your paragraph relies on summary. Can you add a phrase or two of direct quotation?
- Review the kinds of signal phrases used as transitions in the model and compare them to yours.
- Many of the sentences in this paragraph begin with "This is" or "This shows." Look at how the writer in the model opens each of their sentences.
- The model uses four examples beginning with the least famous and moving to the most famous. Clarify the logic for how your examples are arranged.

Figure 2: Student Suggestions for Assignment-Specific Feedback

their revision memos. In my first-year writing courses, at least half of the students always ask for Directive Response. In my literature courses, which are populated by students with more confidence in their writing skills, it is uncommon to have more than a couple students ask for Directive Response; most of the class divides between a preference for Questions as Response and Affective Response. However, whenever students suggest we develop a form of response specific to the assignment, like the Comparison Response illustrated in Figure 2, almost everyone in the class will choose it. Challenging Response, which requires peer readers and instructors to respond to patterns in the paper and look almost exclusively at global issues, is requested the least and is the most difficult for peer reviewers to provide for each other with confidence. Although I do see some students request different forms of response with different assignments, I've not been able to see any pattern among these changes, and sticking with a response style all term is more common.

I also ask students to respond in their memo to at least two other assignment-dependent queries that I put up on the board in our classroom. I might ask which assignment objective they have most fully met or which one they are struggling with the most. I might ask them to name their best source and tell me why it is so useful

or to tell me the most important thing they want their paper to teach a reader. These two queries help me make sure that the writing objectives that are most important to me as the course instructor are considered by the writers as they articulate their feedback requests and can then be addressed during the revision process. These individualized memos also reinforce my own strategic practices. I read each writer's memo before I read their draft, and I craft my feedback as a kind of dialogue with the writer framed through their memo. This practice increases the efficacy of my feedback even as it increases the efficacy of the peer review process.

The memo also prepares students for the next part of our peer review session—coaching their peer reviewers. Asking students to take ten minutes to reflect on their work as they craft their memo to me, helps put everyone in a productive frame of mind for beginning the formal peer review process. After the memos are drafted, I spend an additional fifteen minutes of class time showing them one or two pages of a peer reviewed paper from a previous course. I ask students to identify what type of feedback this student appears to have requested, and we note that some of the comments are global in scope, some reflect suggestions for a paragraph, and some address just one particular sentence. As Nelson Graff notes, “having students read and explicitly process the kinds of writing they will do themselves [in this case peer review suggestions] helps them understand how the genre of feedback works” (83). Next, students begin the work of their peer review groups.

To help keep the peer review process moving along efficiently, I distribute a hand-out that outlines the steps in the process (see Figure 3) and go over it. In brief, each writer in the group gets about ten minutes to explain what kind of feedback they prefer and to preview their paper to the rest of the group. My role is simply to make sure the process is clear and to serve as time-keeper, reminding the entire class every few minutes to move to the next step in the process or to begin the process again with a new writer.

After every writer in the group has previewed their paper to their peer reviewers, I assign the actual work of peer review written out on the shared paper copies as homework. Depending on the length

Peer Review Session 1

1. One writer is chosen to go first in each group. This writer distributes a copy of their work to each group member.
2. The writer gets five to ten minutes to discuss what kinds of feedback they prefer using the types we've been discussing in class. The writer should also walk the group through the places in their draft they feel confident about and areas where they are especially interested in getting feedback. The job of the writer today is to provide an excellent description of the kind of feedback they want.
3. While the writer talks, peer reviewers make notes on their copy of the writer's work. These are cues to the reviewer about what to pay close attention to when reading the piece later. The job of the peer reviewers today is to get an excellent sense of the kind of feedback each writer prefers.
4. The peer reviewers then get two minutes to ask any questions or get any clarifications they need from the writer. Peer reviewers should focus on any ambiguities in the instructions the writer provided or ask about sections the writer glossed over.
5. The process is repeated with another writer in the group distributing their work.
6. The Instructor will keep time and remind each group when to shift to another task and another writer.

Homework:

Peer reviewers will read and respond to each other's work outside of class. Peer reviewers should write their marginal comments in a different color of ink or pencil from the notes they made while the writer was discussing it. This two-tone strategy will help each writer see a kind of dialogue between their own requests to the peer reviewer and each reviewer's feedback. Bring the peer reviewed essays back to the next session.

Figure 3: Process for Peer Review Session 1 and Homework

of class sessions, some instructors might prefer to have peer reviewers do the work of reviewing on the spot, but in my 70 minute class session drafting the memo, participating in class discussion of a sample, and convening the peer review groups so that each writer can distribute copies of their draft and discuss their feedback preferences consume the entire class period.

Step Three: The Writer Listens to the Peer Review Group

Educational scholar Mary Renck Jalongo reminds us that listening is something we take for granted by assuming that it is "practically automatic" rather than a skill we actively teach or even encourage students to examine (13). Worse yet, we are often trained or

rewarded for responding to challenges and criticism defensively—with rationalizations, explanations, or justifications, to name just a few of the reactions Amy Rees Anderson delineates in her discussion of the importance of listening to feedback. I remind students as we begin the second half of our peer review workshop, that when their writing is being discussed, listening is itself a strategy. I emphasize that, obvious as it might sound, their job is to be quiet—just for ten minutes—about their work, to absorb the feedback that they are being offered.

This strategy is typical in creative writing workshops, and there, as here, it is a useful practice for ensuring the work of the peer reviewers is considered before it is critiqued or dismissed. I remind students that we often feel possessive or defensive of our writing, and that this is a good sign because it shows we are invested in it, that it matters to us, but at the same time, during peer review, any impulse to defend writing from the responses of readers is counterproductive. Listening strategically to peer reviewers means making the effort to understand how others have understood our writing—we learn whether we’ve succeeded in getting our point across or not. And, importantly, strategically thoughtful writers do not necessarily take all of the feedback they are offered, but they do listen to it carefully in order to make good decisions about which suggestions to adopt, adapt, or ignore. Whereas during the first peer review session, writers were responsible for talking and advocating for their needs and desires, this time they should focus on listening to the impact and effectiveness of their writing on readers.

The process for the second day of peer review is similar to that of the first class session. After students reassemble with their peer review groups, they go through a sequence of steps outlined in Figure 4.

For instructors, this session is often a fantastic opportunity for our own strategic listening. Circulating among the peer review groups—a kind of overt eavesdropping—gives me insight into what parts of an assignment students are mastering, what elements of a writing task they are struggling with, and what aspects of the assignment are generating anxiety. While students often write telling instructions to me in their memos or raise thoughtful questions in front of the

Peer Review Session 2

1. Peer review groups reassemble and select one writer to begin the feedback session. Each writer should have a draft of their work to take notes on during the discussion.
2. For ten minutes, peer reviewers take turns discussing the draft. The group may work through one page at a time with all reviewers commenting on that section of the essay before turning to the next one. Alternatively, each reviewer can take three minutes to provide an overview of the feedback they provided on the entire piece.
3. While the peer reviewers are talking, the writer should only listen. If the writer has questions about the reviewer's suggestion, they should simply note it on their own draft for now.
4. After listening for ten minutes, the writer gets five minutes to ask the reviewers questions of any sort—for further explanation, to try out new ideas for revision, to address other concerns.
5. This sequence is repeated with each writer in the peer revision group.
6. During this session, the instructor will keep time.

Figure 4: Process for Peer Review Session 2

whole class during discussion, listening to the intra-student dialogue about their experience as writers and readers of an assignment teaches me how to be more effective.

Conclusion: Peer Revision as a Strategic Tool for Writers and Teachers

The question of whether teachers should provide feedback at the same stage of the writing process as peer review occurs is one that investigators have explored to different outcomes. Keith Topping's research suggests that feedback from a group of peers (albeit not from a single peer) is as helpful as feedback from a single instructor. Topping posits that while peer group feedback might be less expert than that provided by teachers, its "greater immediacy, frequency, and volume" has a compensating effect (255). Kaufman and Schunn's research, however, makes clear that student confidence in peer review is significantly heightened when it is paired with instructor review (403). So while some instructors prefer to have peers respond to one draft and to reserve teacher feedback for a second draft, in the long term repeatedly receiving feedback from both peers and an instructor that showcases similar concerns on the same draft will

reassure writers that many different kinds of readers can be trusted and help them transition from a dependence on instructor feedback toward the more casual, peer-based feedback strategies they will need to employ once they have completed their formal education.

Even though I respond to the same draft as the peer review groups work with, I time my own comments in such a way as to give priority to the work of the peer reviewers. Providing precise and meaningful suggestions as a peer reviewer requires real effort. As Rick VanDeWeghe points out, it is much easier for a student to respond to a peer with “Awesome, Dude!” than “You seem to repeat ‘Family institution.’ Maybe you should try an alternative phrase” (95-96). Having devoted extensive class time to the peer review process and encouraging students to ask for and offer smart and practical suggestions to each other, I don’t want students to reflexively defer to whatever comments I may offer them on their drafts. Students are often rightfully proud of the work they have done responding to each other, and I leave space in the writing process for writers to take advantage of their peer reviewers’ ideas and reap the rewards of both providing and receiving peer responses. Encouraging students to place value on the work of their peer reviewers also helps students begin to see peer review as a transferable skill. Developing writing processes that transfer from one context to another has long been a vexed problem for composition researchers (not to mention student writers and writing instructors). But recent work by Hogan Hayes, Dana R. Ferris, and Carl Whithaus demonstrates that “consistent, explicit, and intentional transfer-oriented learning objectives” like those described here do help facilitate the development of transfer in both first-year writing courses and writers working in the disciplines (181).

Consequently, while students get their work back from their peer reviewers at the end of the second peer review workshop session, I do not return the copies of the drafts with the memo that I am commenting on for several more days. In addition to reinforcing the value of peer review, this choice is plainly pragmatic. Since I’m reading twenty drafts for every class, I need more time to review them. Students can begin their revision choices based on the suggestions

that peers have provided, and, when they do receive my feedback, they'll hear the echoes between what their peers have suggested and what I recommend, even if there are some differences and discrepancies between the suggestions I offer and those they received from their classmates.

As another practical strategy, I do almost all of my commenting about a student's writing at this stage in the process rather than on completed assignments. I explain to my students that I want them thinking hardest about the writing advice offered to them by readers (peers and instructor alike) while they are still writing, not after they have completed an assignment. When they turn in the final draft of their assignment, I'll assess it and provide only a very brief summary comment.

Developing this peer review process has itself involved many "drafts" over two decades. Peer review decenters my role in the classroom, and this makes some students uncomfortable. One pattern of recent student comments focuses on the fact that my expectations for the finished assignments are not as heavily emphasized as they are accustomed to because of how much time we spend on peer review. These students are suspicious of assignments that ask them to balance their own writing goals alongside a teacher's instructional goals. They are adept at pinpointing the teacher's expectations and tailoring their work to meet them. As one student succinctly expresses it, "less peer editing; more professor editing." For me, teaching toward this balance is an on-going goal. What I struggle with the most, however, is a different balance, how much time to put toward one step in the writing process, in this case peer review, which means less time for other activities. In the end, however, the kind of student agency this peer review process develops is important to me because it helps guide my students toward long term goals at least as much as toward the specific objectives of the assignment at hand. When my students write comments like the "emphasis was on the writing process in terms of what I needed," and that "the peer revision process and set-up really helped me improve my work," and, finally, that "peer editing was helpful and placed less stress on me," then I know I'm moving toward my own best "draft" of this assignment.

In conclusion, teachers and researchers in the field of writing studies have done an excellent job of instructing students how to be thoughtful peer reviewers and of orchestrating group dynamics to encourage the development of thoughtful writing communities. However, we've done less work considering how to teach writers strategies to evaluate their own needs and to provide opportunities to practice asking for the kind of feedback they are most likely to learn from and implement. Shannon Carter has argued for reimagining writing instruction to encourage "rhetorical dexterity," which means recognizing and valuing the many different literacies students bring to the classroom rather than promoting only the small set of literacy practices that reinforce the status quo. Her vision is more ambitious than mine is, but inverting the peer review process to focus on the writer's needs and desires rather than asking the writer to simply revise their work based on a reader's expectations is a small step toward rebalancing power in our society. As teachers we must still have goals and objectives in our writing assignments, but teaching students to articulate their goals and objectives too, to ask for the kinds of help they want rather than modeling a process that assumes students should passively accept the directions on offer, and to listen to other writers instead of just "fixing" their work are all strategies for helping our students see writing as a way to enact agency, regardless of what they choose to write after our classes have ended.

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