

# PEER REVIEW

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Professional English  
Session 3  
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# WHAT IS PEER REVIEW?

- Students give & receive feedback on each other's work
- Writers use feedback to improve assignment before final assessment

## Objectives:

- Critically evaluate
- Highlight strengths & weaknesses
- Offer suggestions for improvement

# BENEFITS OF PEER REVIEW

- Feedback before assessment allowing time to improve
- Get insights into your own work by reviewing other assignments
- Learn from comparison by seeing other students' work
- Improve understanding of subject matter
- Develop generic skills
  - Critical thinking
  - Problem solving
  - Delivering constructive feedback

# CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Constructive feedback is helpful because it:

- Keeps the writer's needs and goals in mind
- Suggests how writers can strengthen their texts through revision

# HOW TO BE HELPFUL

*Helpful* feedback is:

- ✓ Constructive
- ✓ Specific
- ✓ Balanced
- ✓ Succinct
- ✓ Respectful

*Unhelpful* feedback is:

- x Too positive or too negative
- x General & unspecific
- x Rambling
- x Aggressive – makes reader feel ‘attacked’

# Helpful vs. unhelpful feedback

1. *What are the main strengths of this report?*

✗ **Unhelpful comment:**

“Your report was really good! I enjoyed reading it.”

Author’s response: “I’m flattered you liked my report, but I don’t have a sense of *what* you thought was good about it.”

✓ **Helpful comment:**

“This report was succinct and well written. The aims of the report were clear and I found it easy to identify your take-home messages ...”

# Helpful vs. unhelpful feedback

2. *Where are the main areas for improvement?*

✗ **Unhelpful comment:**

“Your report was poorly written and hard to read!”

Author’s response: “This comment doesn’t really help me to improve anything!”

✓ **Helpful comment:**

“There are a few areas that might make this report stronger. Expanding the Introduction to include more background information would help set the scene a little more (para 2). The arguments could also be strengthened by adding additional references, for examples lines 3, 16 and 55...”

# Helpful vs. unhelpful feedback

3a. *Is the balance between the sections about right?*

✗ **Unhelpful comment:**

“No – there wasn’t enough space left for covering the background of the study.”

✓ **Helpful comment:**

“The balance feels very good; however you may consider the possibility of expanding the background section with greater information on theoretical concepts being tested”

Author’s response: “Although stating good and bad points, none of it was delivered negatively. The comments were given helpfully, with clear points for me to follow.”



# Helpful vs. unhelpful feedback

3b. *Is the balance between the sections about right?*

✗ **Unhelpful comment:**

“The overall balance was good, with no section outweighing any other at all.”

Author’s response: “Very positive review, but not much given that I can improve on - I highly doubt the text was almost perfect.”

✓ **Helpful comment:**

“Not the best balance: The introduction and rationale sections were too lengthy. While very clear, they could be trimmed down quite a bit to be much more concise. For example, I think the last three lines of that section are unnecessary...”

# Helpful vs. unhelpful feedback

4a. *Did you feel the article had good flow and structure?*

✗ **Unhelpful comment:**

“The paper flows really well from one section to the next and there is a logical progression.”

✓ **Helpful comment:**

“It had good flow and structure from paragraphs 1-5, but somewhat lost its flow from then on. This can be fixed by adjusting the order in which you present your points. For instance, in paragraph 2 ...”

Author’s comment: “Thanks for this comment – it was a good mix of positive comments and suggestions for improvement. It was insightful and helped me improve my paper.”

# RECEIVING FEEDBACK

When your work receives a peer review:

- Understand that reviews will vary in quality
- Take time to gather your thoughts & digest the comments
- Think about every comment – even if you disagree, consider if it will be an issue for other readers
- Recognise the review as an opportunity for reflection & improvement

# RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Remember, your reviewers' goal was to improve your text, so view the review as a chance to polish your hard work into its strongest form.

- ✓ Read all the comments & make notes
- ✓ Take time to reflect
- ✓ Address major issues
- ✓ Tackle smaller points
- ✓ Proof-read final document

PEER REVIEW SLIDES FROM: University of Melbourne Office for Learning and Teaching

# PEER REVIEW

## Work on your CV in groups of 3

Use the CV checklist in today's handout

- Are there questions you or your partner can answer? Make note of them, and we will address them at the end of class when we reconvene as one group.
- Make sure that each author receives equal time
- Record your reviewers' advice so that you can incorporate it into your revisions

## Then, peer review project briefs (2 project groups = 1 peer review group)

- Use the worksheet in today's handout
- Make sure that each author receives equal time
- Exchange worksheets when you are done so that each author leaves today with feedback.

During peer review, take a break when you need one.



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