

DESIGNING PEER ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENTS

A RESOURCE DOCUMENT FOR INSTRUCTORS



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DRAFTING YOUR PEER ASSESSMENT (PA) ASSIGNMENT

Questions to consider when drafting your PA assignment:

- a) Where will the PA activity take place (in class/out of class; online/offline)?
- b) To how many peers will students give feedback, and from how many will they receive feedback?
- c) What guidelines (questions, rubrics, checklists, rating scales) will you provide to students to help define their task?
- d) Will the feedback be anonymous?
- e) Will students provide feedback on the feedback they receive?
- f) Will students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit the assignment after receiving feedback from their peers? If they do, how much time will be allocated between the PA assignment and the subsequent assignment submission?
- g) Will the PA assignment be graded?

WHY HAVE STUDENTS ENGAGE IN PEER ASSESSMENT?

Peer Assessment (PA) refers to students providing feedback on other students' assignments to help them improve their work. This feedback may or may not involve a grade. When properly implemented, PA can be a reliable and valid method of assessment (Baker, 2008; Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002; Dochy, Segers, & Sluismans, 1999; Falchikov, & Goldfinch, 2000; Fellenz, 2006; Liu & Carless, 2006; Lu & Bol, 2007; Searby & Ewers, 1997; Topping, 1998; van den Berg, Admiraal & Pilot, 2006; Wanchid, 2015; Xiao & Lucking, 2008).

BENEFITS

When properly implemented, PA can have numerous benefits for students and instructors.

Students:

- critically reflect on their own work by engaging with the assessment criteria as they provide feedback on peers' work and by considering their peers' alternate approaches to the assignment; (Mulder, Baik, Naylor, & Pearce, 2014)
- learn to provide feedback in a constructive manner;
- receive feedback on drafts, and can revise and improve their work;
- develop assessment skills for future academic and post-university work; (Rubin, 2006; Wanchid, 2015.)
- receive more feedback than when instructors are the only ones providing it; and
- reflect on and adopt discipline-specific practices.

Instructors:

- gain insight into students' misconceptions of course material from peer comments; and
- are able to reduce the assessment workload as PA can complement or supplement instructor feedback and grading. This reduced workload may be offset by the increased time investment in properly guiding students to conduct an appropriate review of each other's work.



CHALLENGES

PA can also pose challenges:

- Students may not be able to provide meaningful feedback unless they have proper guidance.
- Students may feel uneasy about assessing their peers or may not trust that their peers are able to assess them.
- Students may have had negative experiences with PA, thus limiting their buy-in.
- Properly implementing PA can be a time-consuming endeavour for both students and instructors, especially the first few times.
- Students may not take the feedback assignment seriously because they may be unaware of how much time is involved in providing feedback (Nilson, 2003).

DRAFTING THE PA ASSIGNMENT

Drafting a PA assignment involves a number of logistical decisions, including deciding who will provide feedback to whom, how many students will provide feedback on a given student's work, and whether or not such feedback will be anonymized. Some questions to consider are offered.

WHERE DOES THE PA ACTIVITY TAKE PLACE?

PA can be implemented in different settings:

	In Class	Out of Class
<i>Online</i>	Students use computers or mobile devices in class to provide each other with feedback.	Students use computers or mobile devices to provide each other with feedback as a homework activity.
<i>Offline</i>	Students are face-to-face in class and discuss feedback orally and/or in writing.	Students meet face-to-face outside of class time to share feedback with one another.

The choice of setting may depend on desired learning outcomes, for example: students will be able to use a particular software programme for giving peer feedback, or by giving face-to-face feedback, students will hone their interpersonal communication skills. In addition, practicalities to consider are class size and judicious use of in-class/out-of-class time.

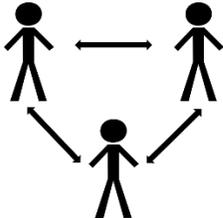
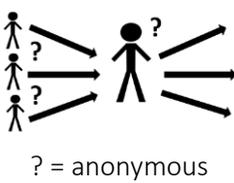
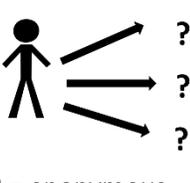
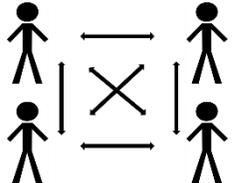
TO HOW MANY PEERS WILL STUDENTS GIVE FEEDBACK, AND FROM HOW MANY WILL THEY RECEIVE FEEDBACK?

It is important to ensure that all students have the opportunity to both provide feedback on one another's work and to receive feedback on their own work. Assigning students the task of providing feedback to 3-4 peers allows for sustained reflection and a variety of perspectives (Leialoha, Leialoha, & Leialoha-Waipa, 2012; van den Berg, Admiraal, & Pilot, 2006; Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Clearinghouse, 2006) without the task becoming overwhelming.

When multiple peers are involved in providing feedback, consider:

- allocating assignments randomly, avoiding mutual pairs where possible (Bostock, n.d; Xiao & Lucking, 2008;) to promote fair, candid feedback (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002; Lindblom-Ylänne, Pihlajamäki, & Kotkas, 2006;).
- forming small “feedback groups” at the beginning of term who peer assess one another’s work before revising it individually for submission (Leialoha, Leialoha, & Leialoha-Waipā, 2012). Feedback groups promote accountability for the feedback provided and allow opportunities to ask questions about the feedback received.

The following images illustrate various feedback directions. Detailed example descriptions appear in the Appendix.

				
Example 1: Written report	Examples 2 & 4: Oral presentation/ Essay outline	Example 3: Newspaper article ? = anonymous	Example 5: Written reflection on course readings ? = anonymous	Example 6: Feedback on presentation visuals

WHAT GUIDELINES (GUIDING QUESTIONS, RUBRICS, CHECKLISTS AND RATING SCALES) WOULD YOU PROVIDE TO STUDENTS TO HELP CLEARLY DEFINE THEIR TASK?

The practice of developing and then sharing guiding questions, rubrics, checklists and rating scales with students helps PA assignments to be clear, effective and reliable, and can prevent misunderstandings about the feedback that students are supposed to provide (Liu & Carless, 2006; Topping, 1998). (For further explanations and examples, see section 4. Developing guiding questions, rubrics, checklists and rating scales to explicitly define the PA assignment.)

IS THE FEEDBACK ANONYMOUS?

In the context of PA, anonymizing feedback means that you are aware of the identity of both the student being assessed and the students who are assessing, but the students are not aware of one another’s identity. Anonymizing is particularly appropriate when using PA to have students grade one another’s work or when you want students to focus on the feedback and not on who is providing it. You may choose to use a double blind review process similar to that used by academic journal reviewers (Rubin, 2006): Each student submits an anonymized draft assignment. Each assignment is randomly distributed to multiple peer assessors who in turn submit an anonymized review that is subsequently provided to the author.

Not anonymizing the feedback encourages students to be accountable to each other for their feedback, thus providing opportunities to discuss their feedback with their peers.



DO STUDENTS PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON THE FEEDBACK THEY RECEIVE (ALSO KNOWN AS “BACK EVALUATION”)?

Students can provide feedback on the usefulness of the feedback they have received (Bloxham & West, 2004; Davies, 2000). Providing such feedback helps students to think not only about how they would integrate feedback into their own work, but also how the feedback they provide may be interpreted by the student receiving it. This activity can ultimately improve the quality of peer feedback itself, as students practice their feedback skills, especially if you are planning several peer-assessed assignments (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002) in which students are able to incorporate the feedback received. Furthermore, if the student providing feedback knows that the student author will respond, the sense of accountability of the student providing feedback is increased.

You might choose to emphasize the importance of high-quality feedback by grading not only the assignment, but the quality of feedback received, as well (Bloxham & West, 2004; Liu & Carless, 2006; Searby & Ewers, 1997; Xiao & Lucking, 2008). In such cases, it is particularly important to have guidelines for what constitutes high-quality feedback. These guidelines can be used by students to do a self-assessment of the quality of the feedback they have provided prior to submitting the PA assignment.

DO STUDENTS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVISE AND RESUBMIT THE ASSIGNMENT AFTER RECEIVING FEEDBACK FROM THEIR PEERS? IF THEY DO, HOW MUCH TIME IS ALLOCATED BETWEEN THE PA ASSIGNMENT AND THE SUBSEQUENT ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION?

Feedback exclusively on a final assignment submission may be helpful for grading purposes, but it does not permit students to incorporate the feedback and improve that specific assignment. Allowing students enough time for providing feedback and revising their work based on the feedback received maximizes their learning and motivation, and may result in better quality assignments (Falchikov, 2007; Friedman, Cox, & Maher, 2008; van den Berg, Admiraal, & Pilot, 2006). Knowing that their feedback will be used by their peers to improve their work can encourage students to invest in the peer feedback assignment (Leialoha, Leialoha, & Leialoha-Waipā, 2012; Rubin, 2006; Topping, 1998; Weimer, 2010). It can be productive to have two rounds of peer feedback: mid-assignment and at the end of the assignment (Baker, 2008; Fellenz, 2006; Murrell, 1984; Weimer, 2012; Weimer, 2015; Xiao & Lucking, 2008).

ARE THE PA ASSIGNMENTS GRADED?

PA assignments can be graded in different ways:

- The instructor grades students' feedback, either for quality or simply for completion.
- Peers grade each other's work.
- A combination of instructor and peer grading is used.
- Peers submit a grade which the instructor can override.

In all cases, it is critical that students understand the criteria according to which grades will be allocated. If students are asked to provide feedback to peers, address whether they will be graded on the quality of the feedback they provide.

Note that technology-supported solutions to support the logistics of PA are available. For further information, request a consultation with TLS: <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/contact/consultations>.

DEVELOPING GUIDING QUESTIONS, RUBRICS, CHECKLISTS, AND RATING SCALES TO EXPLICITLY DEFINE THE PA ASSIGNMENT

GUIDING QUESTIONS

When PA is used to provide feedback for improvement, you are encouraged to develop questions that ask students to focus on elements of the assignment that the students can respond to as readers of the assignment. These questions may ask students to summarize the writing piece or identify (or paraphrase, list, or outline) specific elements of the assignment, rather than make judgments about the quality of the work (Kokernak & Pei, n.d; Nilson, 2003). For example:

- What do you think is the thesis of the paper/speech? Paraphrase it below.
- What do you think is the strongest evidence for the writer's/speaker's position? Why?
- In each paragraph of the paper, underline the topic sentence.

In general, it is recommended that students respond to open-ended questions rather than closed-ended (yes/no) questions to elicit more thoughtful, useful feedback (Nilson, 2003). For example:

- What do you think is the strongest evidence for the writer's/speaker's position? Why? instead of Did the writer provide evidence to support his/her claims?

Closed-ended questions may be appropriate in some cases, though, such as to ensure that all elements of an assignment are present.

Depending on the context, students may not be able to provide evaluative feedback. Evaluative feedback includes feedback that judges their peers' critical or independent thinking, the quality of writing, or whether or not peers' work is a unique contribution to the field. When students are not able to make such judgments, the reliability of the feedback is compromised (Lindblom-Ylänne, Pihlajamäki, & Kotkas, 2006). Asking students questions that call for evaluative responses may be appropriate where the questions are linked to course goals and students have had preparation in addressing such questions.

RUBRICS

A rubric is an evaluation guide that specifies expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria by which the assignment will be assessed and describing the levels of quality for these criteria. Rubrics can guide students in assessing their peers' work by making explicit the criteria according to which an assignment should be evaluated.

Rubrics have two basic components:

1. **Evaluation criteria** define the dimensions that are used to measure how well a student has carried out an assignment (e.g., "integrates course readings"; "develops main ideas"; "addresses counterarguments"). Criteria should be specific and concrete.
2. **Standards of performance** are qualitative descriptions of the characteristics of levels for judging students' performance (e.g., excellent/competent/needs improvement) (Stevens & Levi, 2005).



The following example illustrates how criteria and standards can be displayed in rubric form. Additional criteria would follow the first two shown in the example.

Example: Research paper assignment rubric

Criterion	Standards		
	Excellent	Competent	Needs improvement
<i>Thesis statement</i>	Thesis statement is clear and reflective of paper's content	Thesis statement is present, but is not reflective of paper's content	Thesis statement is missing or unclear
<i>Application of course readings</i>	Discusses and critically integrates ideas from readings	Mentions key ideas from readings but does not smoothly integrate them	Little or no mention of ideas from readings

Rubrics have several purposes. They can:

- Communicate your expectations to students. By providing a rubric to students in advance of the assignment due date, students can learn what you expect a successful assignment to look like and address these expectations when providing feedback to their peer(s).
- Encourage students to analyze their work (self-evaluation). Students can refer to the rubric's evaluation criteria to analyze whether their assignment meets the stated expectations and then revise their assignment prior to receiving peer feedback.
- Make assessing peers' work more efficient and consistent. When providing peer feedback, a student might simply circle or check off the appropriate categories on the rubric to provide feedback to the peer and then write a commentary elaborating on selected rubric categories. If PA is being used for grading purposes, rubrics can be particularly useful. Sharing a rubric can help to ensure that all assessors have a common understanding of the expectations for an assignment, thereby increasing consistency among assessors (Stevens & Levi, 2005).

Rubrics do not need to be complicated. You might focus on three to six key criteria when developing a rubric (Kokernak & Pei, n.d; Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Clearinghouse, 2006).

If using PA for grading purposes, make sure that it is clear how responses to a rubric translate into grades. For example, if certain rubric categories count for a greater percentage than others, make this clear in the rubric itself.

CHECKLISTS AND RATING SCALES

If you wish to provide clear expectations for students in a simpler form than a rubric, you may choose to develop a checklist or a rating scale that describes the key criteria of a successful assignment. Checklists are usually designed in yes/no formats that speak to student performance according to specified criteria. Rating scales state the criteria and provide a range of selections to describe the quality of student work.



Example: Research paper assignment checklist

	Yes	No
The thesis statement reflects the content of the paper.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At least four scholarly sources are cited to support the argument.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Example: Research paper assignment rating scale

	Needs Improvement				Really well done
The thesis statement reflects the contents of the paper.	★	★	★	★	★
The cited sources support the argument.	★	★	★	★	★

For examples of PA guiding questions, rubrics, checklists and rating scales, please go to:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/assessment/peer/examples>

OBTAINING BUY-IN FROM STUDENTS AND GUIDING THEM

Students who are unclear about your rationale for implementing PA are less likely to have confidence or actively participate in PA assignments (Cheng & Warren, 1997). Thus, key first steps in implementing PA are to explain why you are using PA as a learning strategy, what aspects of the work students are expected to assess, and how. Students may have concerns about PA assignments, such as perceived expertise of peers, the time involved, and potential bias (Liu & Carless, 2006). To address students' concerns, you might consider how the implementation of PA can be designed such that it is inclusive (Tissenbaum, 2019). It is also important to respond to any questions and concerns that students have. TAs should be part of such conversations (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002). You might consider the following actions for obtaining buy-in:

- Raise awareness of PA from the very first day of class using various means, such as in-class discussions, and by providing information in the course outline and in myCourses (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002; Fellenz, 2006; van den Berg, Admiraal, & Pilot, 2006). Giving and receiving feedback can be linked to the course learning outcomes (Fellenz, 2006; Xiao & Lucking, 2008). For example, learning outcomes might include one of the following: "Students will give and receive constructive feedback on their work," "Students will learn to integrate peer feedback to improve their written work," or "Students will gain experience with peer review in their discipline."
- Outline the PA assignment carefully (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002). Students should have the chance to ask clarifying questions before embarking on PA.
- Facilitate group discussions about what types of feedback are helpful and constructive, and how to share feedback (Wanchid, 2015). For example, encourage students to begin by addressing positive characteristics of the assignment they are assessing (Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Clearinghouse, 2006) or to "sandwich" constructive criticism between descriptions of two of the assignment's strengths.
- Share your own experiences with PA (often referred to as "peer review" among scholars), framing it as an important step towards contributing to a disciplinary community and internalizing expectations for academic writing (Falchikov, 2007; Kokernak & Pei, n.d; Simon, 2006; van den Berg, Admiraal, & Pilot, 2006).



- Have students complete the PA assignment aloud in pairs the first time to provide the opportunity to talk through their rationales with one another (Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Clearinghouse, 2006).

INVOLVE STUDENTS IN DEVELOPING AND CLARIFYING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Involving students can help prepare them to engage in the PA assignment as they develop ownership of the assessment criteria (Dochy, Segers, & Sluijsmans, 1999; Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000). Depending upon the class size and dynamics, you may choose to have pre-developed criteria that are open for negotiation (Searby & Ewers, 1997), or to co-create criteria, or even to have small groups of students identify criteria, and then have the whole class come to a consensus on a manageable number of criteria for the final rubric (Searby & Ewers, 1997). Regardless of the method of involving students that you ultimately choose, ensure that students understand how to use the rubric once it has been finalized (Andrade, 2005). (See section 5.2 Provide training and practice.)

PROVIDE TRAINING AND PRACTICE

A variety of ways exist to support students with providing and receiving feedback on one another's work:

- Clarify expectations and ensure students understand all terms used in the PA assignment. For example, what does it mean for a paper to be “well-organized? (Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Clearinghouse, 2006)”
- Discuss what you mean by constructive feedback, explaining that feedback can guide peers in improving their work in concrete ways (Rubin, 2006; Weimer, 2012).
- Provide students with examples of poorly-written sample comments and have students rewrite them as constructive feedback.
- Model PA for students with sample assignments (Falchikov, 2007; Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Clearinghouse, 2006) and facilitate in-class discussions of what constitutes constructive feedback (Falchikov, 2007; Rubin, 2006; Topping, 1998).
- Describe to students the different ways they might read an assignment, thereby drawing their attention to the fact that they may focus on different elements. For example, you might encourage students to read each assignment several times—once for meeting minimum assignment requirements (e.g., format), once for content critique, and once for style/structure critique— followed by a final overall assessment (Rubin, 2006).
- Encourage students to concentrate on the content/organization as much as possible and avoid focusing on features such as typographical errors and grammar problems (Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Clearinghouse, 2006).
- Offer students the opportunity to practice PA with sample assignments (Searby & Ewers, 1997) before they begin assessing one another's work. Provide examples of assignments that meet the criteria along with corresponding rubrics or lists of questions (Liu & Carless, 2006; Topping, 1998). Examples can illustrate good, average, and poor assignments from a previous term (with student consent). Give students a chance to offer constructive feedback on these assignments as a group; then, debrief the experience and discuss the feedback they provided together during class (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002). In-class polling with a sample rubric may be used to evaluate a sample assignment, to allow you to see if students' expectations are aligned with your expectations, and then to discuss why/why not.
- Hold class discussions, brainstorming sessions or mini-lectures to help students understand how to decide which feedback to act on in situations with conflicting comments from multiple peer assessors (Rubin, 2006).

MONITOR THE PA ASSIGNMENT

Monitoring the PA assignment can involve checking the feedback students provide to one another; it can also involve evaluating the PA assignment itself.

MONITORING STUDENT FEEDBACK

In addition to supporting students with developing confidence and competence in assessing peers' work, it is important to monitor student-to-student communication throughout the PA assignment (Topping, 1998). For electronically-submitted feedback, you should periodically view and assess a selection of the comments provided (Orlando, 2011) so as to ensure that comments are constructive and appropriate. For in-class feedback, you might keep an attentive ear to students' conversations and discretely intervene among pairs or small groups if needed.

EVALUATING THE PA ASSIGNMENT

Inviting student feedback on the PA experience can inform future iterations of such assignments. It is therefore worthwhile to learn what students thought worked well and what they thought could be improved.

An evaluation can be as simple as a short survey with space for comments that students complete at the end of a PA activity. You can also include questions about PA on [mid-course](#) and [end-of-course](#) evaluations.

Another means for gaining insight into the value of a PA assignment is to require students to submit the feedback they received along with their revised assignments (Weimer, 2010). While students *providing* feedback may be asked to justify each element of their assessment (Bloxham & West, 2004) with reference to specific passages in the assignment, students who *received* feedback may be asked to explain what changes they made further to the feedback and why (Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Clearinghouse, 2006).

You may choose to share the feedback you have received about the PA assignment with the students. Hearing what other students thought worked well can make students more receptive to PA. Furthermore, explaining to students what changes were/will be made to future PA assignments as a result of students' feedback signals to them that the evaluation is taken seriously. You may find that it is useful to modify the PA assignment for subsequent iterations further to the feedback that you receive.

The questions and prompts below have been gleaned and adapted from research on PA, and are shared here to provide inspiration for you as you think about what you would like to learn from your students regarding their PA experience.

1. Likert Scale Rankings (Egodawatte, 2010)
 - a. The peer assessment assignment ...
 - i. was fair
 - ii. was informative
 - iii. aided my learning
 - iv. was accurate
 - v. was unbiased
 - vi. was easy
 - vii. was good
 - viii. was useful (Moore & Teather, 2013)
 - ix. made me evaluate my own work more critically
 - x. facilitated my learning (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002)



- xi. was a valuable experience (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002)
 - b. Peer assessment assignments ...
 - i. make me more independent
 - ii. make me think
 - iii. make me learn more
 - iv. make me gain confidence
 - c. My final grade was a fair reflection of my effort (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002)
 - d. I learned from my peers' comments (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002)
 - e. I think that...
 - i. my peers did a good job in providing me with critical feedback on my work (Pearce, Mulder, & Baik, 2009)
 - ii. I improved my written work as a result of the reviews that I received or wrote (Pearce, Mulder, & Baik, 2009)
2. Plus/Delta Evaluations (Codone, 2011)
 - a. What is one thing you appreciate about the peer assessment assignment?
 - b. What is one thing that you would change about the peer assessment assignment?
 3. Feedback Ratings (Moore, 2016)
 - a. Using a scale where 1 = "only positive feedback" and 10 = "no holds barred review" (that is, direct feedback that, while constructive, may be positive or negative), rate the kind of feedback you:
 - b. would like to receive
 - c. normally receive
 - d. normally give
 4. Multiple-choice questions (Pearce, Mulder, & Baik, 2009)
 - a. As a learning tool, peer assessment was: very useful/somewhat useful/no opinion/not very useful/useless
 - b. I learnt most from: writing reviews of other students' work/receiving reviews of my own work/writing and receiving reviews/not sure
 5. Open-ended questions:
 - a. How would you describe the quality of the feedback that you received from your peer(s)? (Moore & Teather, 2013)
 - b. How would you describe the quality of the feedback that you provided to your peer(s)? (Moore & Teather, 2013)
 - c. Based on your experience, how would you feel about engaging in a peer assessment exercise in the future? (Moore & Teather, 2013)
 - d. How do you feel about reviewing another student's work? (Moore & Teather, 2013)
 - e. How do you feel about another student reviewing your work? (Moore & Teather, 2013)
 - f. What aspect of the peer assessment contributed most to your learning? (Moore & Teather, 2013)
 - g. To what extent were you prepared for the peer assessment exercise? (Moore & Teather, 2013)
 - h. What did you like most about peer assessment? (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002)
 - i. What did you like least about peer assessment? (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002)
 - j. What changes would you like to see in the peer assessment exercise? (Ballantyne, Hughes, & Mylonas, 2002)

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APPENDIX

EXAMPLE 1: WRITTEN REPORT

In class, the instructor explains to students that they will be doing a peer feedback assignment per the instructions below. Students will bring to class a draft of their 1-page reports. Working in pairs, students will provide each other with feedback. The instructor also explains that peer feedback is being provided during class time because not all students will feel comfortable emailing their work to a peer or putting it online for a peer to read even anonymously. In addition, the instructor would like students to develop the skill of speaking to peers about their work. The instructor hopes this peer feedback assignment will have a positive influence on teamwork during the course. For the peer feedback assignment, students are asked to complete the reviewing form below that contains checklists and questions. Students will have 5 days to revise their reports, and then, they will submit them to the instructor.

Author's Name: _____ Your Name: _____

Instructions to author: When the peer review begins, take notes. These notes are for your own benefit when revising and do not need to be submitted. Listen to your peer and *avoid getting defensive or apologizing*.

Instructions to peer reviewer: Read this peer review form first, and then read your peer's paper. You can make annotations on the paper, and/or on this form. The paper's author will keep this form and the annotated paper. You will also have the chance to present your comments, clarify your points and make suggestions during a conversation with your peer.

A. Identify the paragraph or section of the paper that you think is **most effective**, and **draw a box around it**. For this section of the paper, please answer the following questions:

- 1) What makes this section the most effective? **Be specific in your answer.**

- 2) What is the role of this section in helping you understand the concept/theory/science that the author is reporting?

B. Identify the paragraph or section of the paper that you think is **least effective**, and **draw a circle around it**. For this section of the paper, please answer the following questions:

	Yes	Somewhat	No
Does this section advance the point the author is trying to make?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the content of the section problematic?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the organization of the section problematic?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the writing in this section problematic?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Provide suggestions for improvement of this section. Make a minimum of one suggestion.

C. If the paper includes errors in any of the following, circle it here and on the paper draft. Try to include helpful comments about the errors.

topic sentences	numbers/units	hyphen	apostrophe
paragraph structure	plurals	colon	comma
active and passive voice	capitals	abbreviation/acronym	semicolon

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EXAMPLE 2: ORAL PRESENTATION

In preparation for oral presentations that will be given in class the following week, students are giving each other feedback in class today on practice runs of their presentations. Providing this peer feedback is an in-class activity that is not for grades. The instructor has distributed two copies per student of a peer feedback form of guiding questions (see below). The instructor has intentionally posted the peer feedback form to myCourses a couple of weeks earlier so that students can become familiar with it in advance of the in-class activity. Before the peer feedback begins, students practice applying the guiding questions in-class to an example presentation on YouTube. The instructor has students do this example to ensure they understand how to give feedback to their peers. The instructor assigns students to groups of three, making sure that each group has students speaking on a variety of topics. Each student takes a turn presenting to two peers. Peers address the questions in writing and give the sheet to the presenter after the presentation. The written feedback is accompanied by oral comments. In other words, the groups discuss peers' presentations, using the questions to guide discussion.

PEER FEEDBACK FORM	
PRESENTATION GIVEN BY	_____
TYPE OF PRESENTATION	_____
DATE OF PRESENTATION	_____
1. Write the thesis of the presentation:	
2. About how far into the presentation did you know the thesis?	
3. List the main points (3 to 6 points) of the presentation:	
4. List the types of supporting evidence and/or experiences given in the presentation:	
5. What to you was most compelling about this presentation?	
<p>Nilson, L. (2016, April 15). <i>Making student peer feedback meaningful</i>. Workshop offered at McGill University.</p>	

EXAMPLE 3: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Students will write a maximum 500-word news article about a topic in immunology aimed at a lay audience. They should approach this article as though they are telling a story. Questions for students to consider: What background information is necessary? What are the main reasons why this topic is important? Why should the public care? What is the take home message?

Students submit a draft of their writing —without their name or other identifying information—to the software program set up for peer feedback. They will receive feedback on the draft from three peers. The process is double-blind: the author won't know which peers are providing feedback and peers won't know whose work they're reading. The instructor, however, will be able to identify all students' submissions and feedback. After students read the feedback *from* their peers, they provide feedback *to* their peers on the quality of the feedback they received. A detailed assignment description, including how much the peer feedback and “back evaluation” (feedback on the feedback) count toward students' grade, is in myCourses. All submission deadlines are posted in myCourses.

The screenshot displays a myCourses interface for a peer feedback activity. At the top, navigation tabs include 'Assignment', 'Submission', 'Review', 'React', and 'Results'. A yellow banner indicates 'This class is archived'. The main area is titled 'Submission #1' and shows a 'COMPLETED' status with '3 / 3' items. The central part of the screen is a large empty box with the text '(Student writing to be uploaded here)'. To the right, there is a 'YOUR FEEDBACK TO SUBMISSION #1' section with 'No' and 'Yes' radio buttons. Below this is a 'QUESTION 23 OF 23' section with 'Written feedback prompts' asking three questions about the article's structure, flow, and space management. A 'STOP IMPERSONATION' button is visible at the bottom right.

EXAMPLE 4: ESSAY OUTLINE

Students have to submit an essay in three weeks. In the essay assignment description, students see:

The purpose of the essay is for you to develop your awareness of how to support an argument. In preparation, they have to submit a bullet-point outline to a discussion forum in myCourses for peer feedback. The purpose of the peer feedback assignment is for you to reflect on and make informed decisions about how to build and support your own arguments through critical assessment of the quality of support peers provide for their arguments.

The instructor has placed students in online groups of three. Students post their respective outlines either as a Word attachment or as text in the body of the discussion post. Students have one week to provide feedback to

the two peers in their group. The deadline is important so that students can use the feedback to improve their draft essays in time for the submission deadline. Students have to address three guiding questions:

1. Which is the strongest piece of support for the working thesis?
2. Which is the weakest piece of support for the working thesis?
3. What additional evidence or examples might further support the working thesis?

In order to support students with giving constructive comments, an example of feedback has been posted to myCourses. Students receive 1 mark for addressing each of the 3 questions.

EXAMPLE 5: WRITTEN REFLECTION ON COURSE READINGS

To encourage students to do course readings, the instructor has students write short reflections that address the weekly readings. Students post these reflections to a myCourses discussion forum where they have been assigned to groups that reflect their registration in the in-class tutorial groups. Students must read and provide feedback on their peers' reflections. They then rate their peers' reflections using a 5-star scale, and they must provide comments to support their rating. The discussion forum is set up to allow students to post anonymously or not. Students make the choice.

Ratings: 1

Reflection on this week's reading

While I thought you made some compelling points in your reflection, it would have been helpful had you addressed ...

<<< Replied to post below >>>
 Authored by: Anonymous
 Authored on: Mar 24, 2017 10:01 AM
 Subject: Reflection on this week's reading

This week's reading was challenging because ...

EXAMPLE 6: FEEDBACK ON PRESENTATION VISUALS

In preparation for oral presentations that will be given in class in two weeks, peers will give each other feedback on the value of their visual materials. Students are assigned to small groups in myCourses. The instructor has posted these instructions:

- If you are using slideware, video capture approximately 1.5 minutes of yourself (voice) delivering your presentation while showing the slides. Upload the screen capture to the Discussion forum in myCourses.
- If you are using a handout, upload a copy of the handout and an audio recording of yourself talking about how you designed it (e.g., what you chose to include and why; how you ordered the information and why).
- If you are using the board, upload a document that illustrates what you will write on the board and an audio recording of yourself talking, for example, about what you chose to write and why, and when you will write the content and how it will support your oral delivery.
- If you are using visuals such as physical objects, upload images of these objects and an audio recording of yourself talking, for example, about why you chose these objects, when you will show them and how they will support your oral delivery.



View/listen to your group members' materials. Provide feedback on the value of the visual aids according to best practices or specific criteria discussed in class and in course readings. You can provide feedback in myCourses by attaching an audio file to your post or posting written comments. Each member should provide feedback to three peers.

Guidelines for giving peer feedback: Your feedback must be constructive and respectful. It is good practice to balance feedback by saying something positive in addition to addressing areas for improvement. Provide ideas for improvement in the form of a suggestion. For each piece of feedback you offer, provide a concrete example so that your peer understands what you mean. For example:

The content in your handout is difficult to follow [area to improve] because there is a lot of full text [concrete example]. Consider writing content in point form and/or using headings [suggestion for improvement]. It was a good idea to include your name, your presentation title, the date and the presentation venue in the header [something positive].

The instructor has also included information for students about assessment:

Each peer feedback posting is worth 5%. You will be assessed on the quality of your feedback, namely, the inclusion of positive comments, comments on areas to improve, concrete examples to support your comments, and concrete suggestions for improving any weak areas you identify.

If you fail to post your materials by the due date, you forego the right to receive a grade for giving feedback.