

LUC WRITING CENTER – “HOW TO PEER EDIT”

Especially in a writing course LUC’s UCWR 110 CORE Writing Seminar, your teacher will assign several essays that you must *draft, revise, and rewrite* during the semester. After you have completed your first draft, your teacher may ask you to bring this to class for a peer review day. **Peer review days, or peer editing assignments**, *involve members of a class switching, reading, and correcting each other’s papers.*

Your teacher will usually provide **guidelines or peer review sheets** for you to use when offering advice to another student about their writing. Don’t be nervous about peer-editing or think that you’re “a bad writer” yourself and thus can’t possibly offer advice to a peer. *Often it is easier to spot issues with other people’s writing as a reader than it is to find issues your own as a writer.* Eventually, peer-editing can teach you what to improve about your own writing by showing you what issues to look for and how to correct them.

Things to Do When Peer-editing:

1. Focus on “large-scale” issues in your peer’s paper such as finding the thesis, improving the thesis, having strong topic sentences, supporting points with proof, and citing sources. Use the guidelines or peer review sheets provided, according to your teacher’s instructions.
2. Praise your peer for doing something well in their paper (i.e. having a strong thesis) **BEFORE** mentioning issues that they need to address (i.e. not introducing or explaining quotes). This will help both you and your peer feel positive about having your work read and more comfortable with offering constructive feedback on others’ work.
3. Write your name and your peer’s name on the peer review sheets or essay so that they know who offered constructive feedback. That way if your peer can’t read your handwriting they can come to you and ask for clarification on a comment.
4. When you give your peer advice, make sure to write in complete, descriptive sentences.

Things NOT to Do when Peer-editing:

1. Don’t just correct the “small-scale” issues in your peer’s paper such as spelling or grammar errors. This will waste precious time that can be spent locating and addressing “large-scale” issues.
2. Don’t make fun of other people’s writing or rudely tell them that their work is “bad.” Instead, try to focus on how they can “improve” their writing. Even if you are completely comfortable with having your work criticized, your peers may feel severe anxiety during the same peer editing activity.
3. Don’t forget to take the peer review assignment seriously and support your peer’s work. No matter what employment field you enter after college, you will often have to critique other people’s work throughout the course of your professional career. Like group projects, peer review days provide you with the opportunity to practice collaboration with the group and use the “hive mind” to improve your individual writing and research.
4. Don’t skip class on peer-review day. Besides letting down your classmates and missing out on your peer review day points, your own work may suffer in consequence. Without benefitting from peer advice, you will probably receive a lower grade on the overall essay assignment even if your paper is as good as you think it is.