

“Peer Feedback to Writing” Reflection

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I am a classroom teacher for Crestwood Middle School in Kentwood Public Schools. Kentwood is a suburb of Grand Rapids, Mi. Kentwood is an extremely diverse community that serves students from a variety of countries all over the world. I teach a Gifted and Talented class. My students apply to get into the program. The criteria used for acceptance are the Naglieri test, Language Arts grades, Reading Inventory score, writing sample, and teacher recommendation.



In December of 2017 my 7th graders finished reading *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson. As a culminating activity, the students did research on one of many civil rights issues. They then wrote an essay. The objectives for the essay were to write in a “formal” voice, have an intro paragraph, three sub topics, at least one paragraph in length, and a concluding paragraph. The focus of the paper was on organization, topic sentences, in-text citations, and a work cited page. The students were also required to type their paper in MLA format.

The students were very engaged with their topics. They were able to choose off a list generated by me. I drew names like a lottery to see who would choose first. The students were given a graphic organizer to help with note-taking. They used that tool to then type their paper. Each day I had mini-lessons on a different aspect of the paper. For example, writing a good intro and concluding paragraph, how to do in-text citations, how to write a good topic sentence, and how to do MLA format with a Works Cited page.

After the rough draft was complete, I asked the students to take part in the “Peer Feedback to Writing” process. In the past, I have just paired the students and asked them to fill out a rubric (see below) on each other making sure to give one compliment and one suggestion. This time I grouped the student in groups of four. Each student had their rough draft pulled up on the computer (we have printing issues at our school). The students then passed the computer to

the right with the peer review sheet. They read the first paper for “content” and filled out the first section of the sheet. They also were asked to give one compliment and one suggestion. Because the paper was online, the students were also free to make electronic comments as well. After about 5-6 minutes, the students passed the computer, with the paper, to the right. They then read that paper for “structure” and filled out the second section of the peer review sheet. They were asked to give one compliment and one suggestion to that student, as well. After another 5-6 minutes, the students passed the computers for the third time. This time they read this paper for “Grammar and Citations.” They followed the same protocol as the last two papers.

The students were extremely engaged with their classmates’ papers. When asked about the process when it was over, they were very favorable. They said things like:

“It was eye-opening”

“It helped me see some mistakes.”

“I like the way it was broken into three parts. It was easier to write about just one thing. I think I could give better feedback.”

“I like getting more perspectives.”

“I like getting to see different ideas.”

The only negative comments were primarily about time:

“There was not enough time to read all the papers.”

“I had to read too many and couldn’t finish.”

“Not enough time to finish.”

and “It was hard to hold back on fixing grammar until the end.”

Here are some of the compliments I saw on the student’s peer review paper that traveled with their rough draft:

“I like how you put details in your writing. You were descriptive.”

“Your intro really grabs the reader.

“I like how you had a paragraph for each of the founders.”

“Amazing conclusion, the last sentence truly completed the paper.”

“I like how you gave examples of what the riots can cause.”

“I overall really liked how your claim went along with your whole paper.”

“Your thesis is amazing. Perfectly tells what I am going to read.”

Here are some of the suggestions the students wrote for each other:

“Maybe find a different word than ‘although’ for one or two places in your paper.”

“Tell us what ‘Woolworth’ is.”

“The topic sentences are good, but you are missing one.”

“Put the Works Cited on its own page.”

“In the conclusion, ‘are’ can become ‘have been.’”

“I don’t understand how Hiram Rhodes is related to the Voting Acts Right.”

“Capitalize proper nouns.”

“You should mention something from the last paragraph in the conclusion.”

I would participate in this process again. I liked the fact that the students had read three other papers before they handed their paper in. I believe reading other people’s writing can help us become better writers. I also believe that this process can help them recognize mistakes in their own paper. I liked the fact that for each of those papers they were actually reading for just one thing instead of reading one paper for everything. Reading for everything can be a little overwhelming. I

In the future, I would take a little more time the day before to prepare them for what they should be looking for. I would also practice what a helpful compliment is compared to just an empty one like, “I think your paper is really good.” I did see many compliments like that, and I don’t think those are very helpful. In the end, I was pleased with how the process went and will do it again with our next paper.

Peer Review Rubric (Used by Anne Brown's 7th Graders)

Author: _____

Paper #1: Content

Editor:	Does the paper have all the required paragraphs?	5	4	3	2	1
	Is the introductory paragraph done correctly?	5	4	3	2	1
	Are the three subtopics easy to identify?	5	4	3	2	1
	Is the concluding paragraph done correctly?	5	4	3	2	1

Compliment: _____

Suggestion: _____

Paper #2: Structure

Editor:	Does the claim tell you what the paper is about?	5	4	3	2	1
	Do the topic sentences adequately introduce paragraph?	5	4	3	2	1
	Do all ideas flow logically from one idea to the next using appropriate transitions?	5	4	3	2	1
	Mark any area of the paper that is confusing. Explain why you don't think it follows logically. _____					

Compliment: _____

Suggestion: _____

Paper #3: Grammar/Citations

Editor:	Does the paper have correct grammar(look for subordinators, coordinators, run-on sentences, and sentence fragments)?	5	4	3	2	1
1	Are there two in-text citations used correctly?		5	4	3	2
	Are the Works Cited on a page by themselves? (Are they formatted correctly and alphabetical?)	5	4	3	2	1

Compliment: _____

Suggestion: _____

