Guiding Principles

1. **Determine your goals** — what do you want to accomplish at this particular moment — and link your planning to those goals. You don’t have to do everything in one assignment or activity.

2. **Provide structure** that lets you accomplish those goals and supports student learning and growth in writing and the habits of professionals in your field.

3. **Model what good peer review is, and help your students practice** — don’t assume they know how to provide meaningful feedback without your guidance. Teach, don’t just assign.

4. **Provide feedback** on the peer review as well as on the writing to prompt the habits you want them to develop, and give them guidance on revision.

5. **Make decisions and create documents** — no matter which strategy you use, you will need to think through logistics of timing, implementation, grading, etc., and create documents that provide explanation and directions to students.

Three Strategies

**Single assignment or peer review in a class session**

**Big Take Away:** Use class time to model productive peer review, even if you then ask students to continue providing feedback to each other online or outside of class.

**Major Work:** Create guiding questions that match the learning goals for that assignment and your students’ experience level (see reverse for examples).

**Consider:** Where will they be in the writing process; what skills and knowledge do they have that will let them give good comments; how will you grade/evaluate/assess; will you ask students to use a rubric; what documents do you need to create to explain or guide; will you require a separate memo from the author or other evidence of their use of the reviewers’ comments; how will the groups be constructed?

**In-class review group**

**Big Take Away:** Structured like the review process students will encounter in the field, but don’t assume they know how this process works or how to behave as reviewers or writers responding to reviews.

**Major Work:** Create a process that mimics a disciplinary/professional practice (e.g., journal review).

**Consider:** What are the steps and roles you need to teach them; what’s the time line; what documents do you need to create to model or explain; how will you grade/evaluate/assess; how will groups be created; what will your role be?

**Out-of-class review/writing group**

**Big Take Away:** Structured dissertation or thesis review group or part of an on-going lab experience. Goal is to model just enough to ensure success and move students toward independence quickly (which may mean that not all participants are equally or continually invested in the group).

**Major Work:** Create structure that fits your situation; motivation must be internal since grades are not a part of the incentive.

**Consider:** What are the logistics and time lines; what documents do you need to create or assemble; how will you provide feedback on the quality of the reviewers’ comments; will you expect to see evidence of reviewing and using reviews to revise; who will participate; how will rules be created and the group sustained over time?
### Creating Guiding Questions to Match Goals

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<th>If the primary goal is</th>
<th>Examples of guiding questions/activities are</th>
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| Clarity and relevance to the assignment | • Where do you get confused or lost?  
• Summarize the main point(s) and compare to other reviewers’ summary and the author’s stated intention.  
• Identify where the writing fulfills the assignment and where it doesn’t. |
| Use evidence or data to support a conclusion | • Where does the writer need to expand the evidence and where does the prose need to be tightened or made more precise?  
• Which parts of the supporting evidence are convincing and appropriate? What questions does this evidence or the conclusions from this evidence create for you as a reader?  
• Where are figures, graphs, and other visual elements used appropriately and explained clearly in the text? Where do these elements need to be improved? |
| Improved organization or following the organization of an expected genre | • Create an outline of the writing and compare to outlines created by other reviewers; is this arrangement logical, effective, and appropriate?  
• Where are the elements of the expected genre done well and where to they need revision? (e.g., Are methods confined to the methods section? Are results presented at the appropriate moment?)  
• Where does the essay really begin? Where should it end? |
| Appropriate use of sources | • Highlight each time a source is used. Has the author struck an appropriate balance of original prose with ideas or language from sources? Which sources are used appropriately and correctly? Which references to sources are misleading, disconnected, or incorrectly cited?  
• In the literature review section, how would you characterize the use of sources? (e.g., Are they tied together to provide a coherent story or strung together like beads on a string with no apparent logic or coherence?) |
| Habits of good writers | • What could you learn about writing from this writer? What do you think the writer could learn from you?  
• What evidence can you see in this writing that the author is thinking deeply and writing with care and precision? |
| Cleaning up surface errors | • Mark where you stumble as a reader or expect the sentence or paragraph to go a different way. Notice unclear pronouns (“this,” “there”), especially at the beginning of sentences, and suggest how these might be made clearer. Note where sentences should be combined to better show relationships between ideas.  
• Avoid being the grammar police, but mark any grammatical, mechanical, or typographical errors you see. If you’re not sure if something is really an error, highlight it so the writer can look it up. |