

Peer Review

Providing Warm and Cool Feedback

In July, I had the chance to participate in Peer Review with other teachers at a retreat that I went to with the members of my learning community. This process was shared with us by the woman who leads our group. Her name is Giselle Martin Kniep, and I'm happy to give her credit for teaching me this process. I learned a lot from it, and I hope that you will too!

What is peer review?

The peer review process is an opportunity to share our work with others and allow them to provide feedback and ask questions that will help us make improvements.

How does it work?

You will spend 15 minutes in peer review for each group member. During this time, you will follow these steps:

1. The writer will share a piece of work with you that he or she would like to receive feedback on. The writer will tell the group what he or she would like to learn from the process by sharing the purpose of the writing with you.
2. You will read the work or listen to it as it is read. Then, you will take a few minutes to plan your feedback/response.
3. You will provide WARM FEEDBACK first. You may only share one thought at a time, so that everyone has a chance to speak.
 - You may not give praise or any sort of compliment to the writer during peer review. You may do so afterward, though!
 - Determine what is strong about the piece, and use evidence from the writing to state what is strong about it.
 - Think about what the writer wanted to learn, and find the evidence that suggests how the writer achieved his or her goal.
4. After everyone has shared their warm feedback with the writer, begin to share COOL FEEDBACK.
 - You may not criticize the work or the writer by making statements about mistakes, errors, or weaknesses.
 - Instead, ask the writer to consider different points about the writing that may help him or her to improve.
 - Think about what the writer wanted to learn, and ask questions that might help the writer discover the answers himself or herself.

TIPS FOR PROVIDING WARM FEEDBACK:

Avoid using the following statements:

I liked it. This is good writing. Great job!

Use facts from the work to support your statements.

1. The way you describe the main character's behavior helps me understand her better.
2. You create an important message in your writing—that it never pays to tell a lie.
3. You describe the scenery using your five senses, and this helps me see the setting better.

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TIPS FOR PROVIDING COOL FEEDBACK:

Avoid using the following statements:

I don't get it. This is disorganized. You spelled some stuff wrong.

How could you help the writer think about the work in a way that will allow for improvement?

1. I wonder what the river sounded like.
2. I'm thinking about the main character. Was she shy or really outgoing? How can you describe that better?
3. What happens to the main character when she tells this lie? Can you add that detail in so that the main idea comes through?

Starting your statements with words like those listed below might help.

I wonder
When did
I'm curious

Why did
What happens
Did you ever consider

Who did
Describe

How did
Tell me about
Think about

As the writer under review, your job is to take notes, think about what is said, and remain silent. You may not defend your work or agree or disagree with the speaker. You can use your notes to help you decide how you want to respond to what you learned. You may make many changes as a result of this process....or maybe you won't make any at all. It is YOUR writing. Peer review just offers you the chance to get feedback.