Peering In

I was excited to learn, at the start of the semester, that we would be doing graded peer reviews in English 1101. Not only do I enjoy this type of work, but I consider it among my few raw talents, and always appreciate the insight that a fresh set of eyes can provide. I have never held a negative opinion of peer reviews, though I sense that the majority of my new classmates might.

Very simply put, I am a lazy writer. I tend to procrastinate and skip early drafts, then edit as I go along, and revise too much after I think I’m finished. Structured peer reviews help to mitigate these problems in my writing process by providing me with a second opinion very early on. The peer reviewer acts not only as a stoplight to guide my writing, but also as the proverbial wall against which I can test new ideas and experiments. I also feel that my experiences and insight are beneficial to other writers, and I take this type of feedback seriously. The following is one such review that I provided to a fellow student, a strong-visioned writer with great ideas, albeit some lingering issues in the formal side of things.

In this review, I focused on restructuring his own words into stronger, more convincing sentences, and in correcting the recurring issues seen in his grammar and punctuation. My comments are shown in blue text, with suggested additions highlighted in yellow, and suggested omissions stricken through.
In order to demonstrate how the game of baseball correlates with writing, each of my essay topics from this semester, and what I learned during the writing process along the way, encompass the idea of critical thinking skills that go along with the game of baseball. This idea or motivation I have found this same idea also goes along with writing, the main objective being to win the game.

In this one we took out the quantifier at the beginning and made it into two sentences. However, since English and the game of baseball are similar, it allowed me to start improving and becoming a better writer. Whenever I step onto the field, regardless of whether I am confident in my ability to perform or not, there is a sense of urgency that goes through my head. I love this sentence for its imagery, but the ending could use some fixing up. Instead of saying "there is a sense of urgency," try it make it more about your feelings at that exact point in time. As it is now, to me it sounds like the entire stadium has a sense of urgency around it, which may be the case but I want to know how you felt personally!

"...whether I am confident in my ability to perform or not, my head still runs wild with the need to _______ (fill in the blank)."

Much more colorful, and it brings me into your thoughts like you're wanting to do. Everyone has a job on the field; I have to make sure I do my part as my teammates have to do their part. Having to rely on my instincts has paid off in game situations throughout the game has paid off, but not always. Taking on this class was like starting a new game: my classmates were my teammates, the teacher was my coach, and the overall objective was to win (or in other words: pass). I found there are a few things you have to do to win any game, that is to better yourself by instruction from your coach, to learn from your teammates, and to do your part.

Note: when making lists, you don't always have to have "to" or "an" or "the" before each entry, but if you start the first entry with one added, make sure the rest of the list matches.

I found that I take on the task of writing my papers much like I take the field during a game: I listen to what my teacher has to say, apply it to my writing the best I can, and use any constructive criticism I can get to better my writing skills.

I think this last sentence could work well with a colon and the list of examples afterward, but if you prefer two sentences here I can see it that way also.

While writing my first paper, personal essay, I wasn't given a specific topic like in all of my past high school assignments. We talked at length about this one, but after another read through I think its just fine as it is. For the first time I had free will to write about anything I wanted. I focused on organizing my writing for the first time; passion and emotion is something were elements I could now put into my writing. Whereas before I was assigned a topic which I felt that didn't serve a purpose, I now felt that someone could read my work and actually gain something from it. Ideas immediately started to come into my head, and the brainstorming process began as soon as I received the prompt. I wanted to make a statement, and now I was able to do it.
specifically opened up this new form of expression for me? I have been allowed to express my own ideas that were my own and opened up a new way to express my emotions other than the baseball field.

Before, the only way for me to express my emotions was by playing ball, but writing now gave me a new way to show emotions while I'm not on the field. Two things here: first, instead of using "emotions" a second time in this sentence, see if there is another word or phrase that says what you mean more accurately (ie, which new emotions were you feeling now that you were getting a feel for writing?). Second, be careful not to overuse key phrases like "on the field" when you are making a broad analogy like this. They are very quickly worn out on the reader, so if you can find an area (like this one) where the baseball analogy can stand alone without being spelled out, take out the reference and save it for another time. Starting a new paper, I would get the same feeling as if I were about to start a game. For me, writing wasn't about not having good ideas, but executing them in the way I need to in order to form a proper essay. This would happen on the field as well: I would think in terms of how to make a game-changing decision, but at times I wasn't sure if I was making the right choice, or if I knew exactly how to execute it to perform what I intended it to do.

I would sit thinking about a million ideas getting absolutely nowhere - I think the phrase you used here is just too clichéd to be effective. You know what I would like to see here? Some sort of metaphor about baseball, maybe some drills you did in practice that you hated, or having a long inning where you just can't get the third out. This is the perfect spot to reinforce the baseball analogy. Then I started writing down all the important ideas that I so wanted to incorporate in my essay. I soon had enough ideas that connected with one another and dove right into my writing with rare excitement which was rare. Like reading a pitcher as I was up to bat, each pitch was a little different, but they all have pattern tendencies and there I make my connection. The pitcher may think he has me on a guessing game, but once I focus on what is actually happening, he is now a part of my game. Throughout my first essay, I threw out - this is a little iffy, having "throughout" and "threw out" so close to one another. I would change one or the other (probably this one) the ideas that I had even if they didn't make sense. As a writer and a baseball player, I feel like that by addressing my papers in the same perspective as I do for the game that I love, I maintained the passion throughout my writing.

My second paper, analytical analysis, focused on attention to detail and what makes a specific style of writing "your" style. When receiving the prompt - it was more than a bit intimidating as I had to include the different sentence types, sentence structures, and clauses. Then, I had to describe the patterns each writer used in their writing to portray what they were trying to say. My writing process was messy as it required me to constantly speculate about the authors' style, and to move around sections of my paper until I had created an order I thought was the most effective. Messy is an understatement; I was completely lost, as I was the first time I ever went to a showcase, or a state invitational, and saw all of the talent that took the field. I was always in the top five of players on my team and now I was in a dugout full of top-five players. Sitting in my English 1101 class with my professor and peers was a whole new game. I had had great teachers in high school, but just like my coaches, their level of greatness...
is relative to the area their surroundings. In the end, I was rewarded with seeing how I was capable of depicting someone's style and able to make a final product. When creating my wild card, I knew that I wanted to incorporate the emotion that shows my love for the game of baseball. I included a memoir that could be about any experience. It describes a sense of humor, and sometimes when you're down you just need a friend to get you back to what you were doing before. Just like in baseball: always moving forward. While playing the game I loved, it was always about having fun and sometimes when things didn't go your way, you had to proceed; move forward onto the next game with new day, new plan. When looking at the work I have created this semester in English 1101, I realize I have came a long way in the writing process. I am far from mastering the skill, but as the semester went on the topics made you me think more; really forcing you me to get out of your comfort zone. I now feel more confident in the work I create, and like in baseball when you play face opponents that play at a higher level than you, there is two options: learn to play at their level, or get left behind. I have taken that perspective into English 1101 this semester and I began to execute my ideas.