

Communication

Peer Review

The online world hosts a variety of role-playing games where players can interact with each other. Every gamer plays the protagonist in their own story, but they often ask their fellow gamers for guidance and help. Players can provide information and advice regarding gameplay, side quests, and strategies to better each other's gaming experience. Likewise, a writer serves as the main contributor to their own work, but that doesn't mean that they can't ask their fellow writers for input. Initially, this perspective wasn't the stance I took when I envisioned the peer reviewing process.

When I learned that English 1102 would require peer editing, I expected it would be nothing new. However, early in the class, I discovered a problem with my peer reviewing strategy: in my high school peer revision process, I had developed a tendency to edit my peers' work to reflect my voice instead of theirs. Furthermore, I wasn't accustomed to having people edit and critique *my* work. As the valedictorian of my high school, my classmates had constantly asked me to look over various essays, projects, and assignments. It wasn't until I took English 1102 that I understood why they *really* asked me to review their work: rather than helping my peers strengthen their arguments, I would supplant their words with my own. Essentially, I had played the game for them. Instead of telling my peers to find evidence, I would provide it, and instead of suggesting that they reword a sentence, I would rework it for them. I didn't aid my peers' growth; I stunted it, and they simultaneously stunted mine by never seriously reading and reviewing my papers. Upon my realization, I became determined to improve this peer reviewing strategy (at least on my end) to reflect what it should be—a peer *review*.

For me, changing my peer reviewing approach meant starting with global revisions. In red text at the top of each document I reviewed, I created a section entitled "Overall Comments," where I placed all of my opinions concerning the bulk of the project. I always made sure to start this section with a positive comment because I knew that my peers had put a lot of hard work into their projects, and that work deserved to be acknowledged. I then moved onto evaluating the organization of the project, as well as the overall tone and the development of my peers' ideas. These comments differed from praise to advice to simply calling attention to some problem areas. Once I was satisfied with my commentary on the global level, I skimmed for possible local revisions. For most of the local revisions, I could utilize Emma's Markup section to express what I felt my peers could add to better their assignments. However, in certain cases, I would insert a note in order to suggest potential options regarding word choice or

phrasing. Once content with my local revisions, I would read the entirety of the assignment aloud. This tactic had helped me when I had been writing my valedictorian speech; I had discovered that reading aloud made it easier for me to identify minor errors in the writing. As long as I paid attention to each word I spoke, I could better identify errors within individual sentences as well as evaluate the effectiveness of the flow, transitions, and syntax. I began to provide advice instead of leadership, and I discovered how to help their characters succeed without doing the job for them.

The following is an example of my new and improved peer revision process. Since I cannot replicate Emma's commentary, I am instead using coordinated highlighting to demonstrate my process.

Peer Revision

Overall Comments: Your project is very well done! It accurately and exceptionally portrays your vision of this adaptation! Your sections are well defined, but perhaps you could work on the flow between sections? Sprinkling in a few references to previous sections might help with this!

With a Little Flare(1) and Fun: The Importance of Being Earnest "Re-done by Zachary Durden:

The Importance of Being Earnest, written by Oscar Wilde, is(1) a satirical play of the Victorian Era. In his play, he(1) relentlessly mocks and berates his audience's views on marriage and other Victorian ideals like(2) being earnest, honest, and polite(1) (Spininger 50). My favorite scene from *The Importance of Being Earnest* is the “Tea Scene” between Gwendolen and Cecily because it is so(1) humorous and full of great dialogue. However, I wish to change the context of the scene and have it occur during 2015. By doing this, I prove that *The Importance of Being Earnest* can be shifted to any time when supported with proper context, can still rely upon current themes, and play on “earnest” qualities present.(1)

For the adaptation(1) of this scene, I need a city that is aesthetically pleasing and full of culture. New(1) York is a beautiful city regardless of the era present(2) day New York is a cultural melting pot, which makes it the perfect place to base my interpretation. With such diversity present, it makes a diverse cast feasible and the twist I will add possible. However, while the overall setting of the play takes place in New York city(3), the scene of which(1) I am producing will be in the Hamptons. Seeing as how Jack was, “Ernest in town and Jack in the country,” the country in my adaptation is the Hamptons (Wilde). The

Hamptons acts as a getaway for many rich New Yorkers, like Jack, to leave the busy city. By Jack having property both in the Hamptons and New York City, he is able to maintain the two separate identities and thus maintain a pivotal part of the play.(2)

In my adaptation(1) of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Algernon will be gay. And(1) by changing Cecily to Carter, a gay romance can be created though it will not follow stereotypical gendered roles(4). This relationship can bring modernity and authenticity to my adaptation while honoring Wilde, who, at the time, could not be open about is(2) sexuality. Also, the relationship further enhances the comedic scene between Carter and Gwendolen. Not only are they arguing about who really has Earnest, but they will(5) also question whose love he really has.

Beautiful: I include this section in my peer reviews to assure that I provide comments on exemplary aspects of my peers' work. Not all comments have to point out something the author should change.

(1) Your structure here is amazing!

(2) This definitely brings your thesis full circle.

Wrong Word: Every now and then, the author will use an incorrect word. This error usually occurs when a writer accidentally misspells a word or, every now and then, when trying to distinguish between tricky homonyms.

(1) I think you mean "flair" instead of "flare."

(2) His?

Extra Space: I've noticed that Emma has a problem with occasionally adding extra spaces between words, and while I don't always catch it, I try to help others correct it.

(1) You accidentally put two spaces here!

Suggestion: I offer this category purely based on my opinion. There is nothing technically wrong with the way the author has written the following words or phrases, but there might be a more efficient/appropriate way to express their meanings.

(1) Maybe replace “he” with “Wilde.”

(2) “Like” is colloquial. “Such as” might work better with your tone!

Omit: Usually, this section is reserved for when a word either takes away from the writer's mean idea or simply adds nothing to it.

(1) You could omit this word!

Special: Essentially, this group is my “miscellaneous” category, discussing specific issues that only occur once. Any of the issues below would get their own category if they were an ongoing problem.

(1) Work on the parallel structure in this sentence!

(2) You need a conjunction here.

(3) Capitalize “city.”

(4) You need something to set this phrase off! Maybe a comma or parentheses?

(5) You changed from present tense to future tense here, so keep an eye on that!

Repetition: Any instance of repetition gets its own category because using the same color to point out multiple instances of ineffective repetition would be, well, *ineffective*.

(1) You might want to change up your transitions between paragraphs! This one is a bit repetitious.