

# Campus Academic Resource Program

## Peer Response

### What is Peer Response?

Peer response is a process in which writers share their writing with their classmates, colleagues, or other trusted peers. In this exchange, writers should open themselves to comments and constructive criticism from peers.

CARP's peer response utilizes identification questions rather than judgment questions. An example of a judgment question is, "was the thesis clear and concise?" The student is asked to judge their peer's writing with a "yes" or a "no" response, which does not yield helpful feedback in either case. An example of an identification question is, "underline the thesis, and restate it in your own words." Instead, the student is asked to identify and restate what they have understood to be the thesis.

### Why is Peer Response helpful?

The process of peer response offers writers many benefits:

- It gives writers additional opportunities for improving their work before it is finalized.
- Responding to another paper helps clarify the goals of the assignment and the components of a well-written paper.
- Writing for peer response provides an opportunity to write for an audience broader than a professor.
- Peer response builds spoken and written communication skills.
- Peer response can improve confidence in one's writing.

### How should I respond to my peers' writing?

- Remember to respond to the writing, not the writer.
- Read through the paper briefly once. Then read the Peer Response Questions and begin answering as you read through the paper more carefully.
- Avoid paying too much attention to local issues (grammar, spelling, punctuation, formatting, etc.). Instead, focus on global issues (clarity, relations between ideas, support for claims, transitions, etc.).
- If something is unclear, ask questions by writing in the margins. For example, you might ask "what do you mean when you write \_\_\_\_\_," or "I think you are saying \_\_\_\_\_ in this part, is that correct?"
- If you read something interesting or particularly like a passage, make a note of it.
- If you think additional explanation belongs somewhere, explain where it belongs.
- If you are having a difficult time responding, remember that it is okay to just report what **you** understand the writer to be saying (summarize what you have read).
- For additional direction, please speak with a CARP facilitator or your professor.

Imagine that you are the author of the paper you are reading. What would you want to hear so that you could improve your paper or know that you have achieved what you wanted to?