FINAL PROJECT PART 4 - PEER REVIEW

Submit your peer review of your classmate's paper. This part of the project is only available to those who completed Part 3. You will find your peer's paper attached in the comments to this assignment. Once you upload your response, it will be shared with the author.

Start your review by stating the editor's name (that's you) as well as the name of the author, and the title of the paper you are reviewing. Copy the questions below and provide an answer for each; optionally, provide any further comments or suggestions you deem appropriate.

(a) What is especially interesting or effective about this draft? What was most memorable?
(b) What seems to be the central idea or purpose of this essay? Suggestions?
(c) How well does the draft address its intended audience? Suggestions?
(d) Any comments or suggestions about the opening paragraph?
(e) How well is the draft organized? Suggestions?
(f) Are there enough examples? Are they detailed enough? Suggestions?
(g) Is the draft too long or too short? Are there any parts which seem to be superfluous and should be cut?
(h) Is the conclusion clearly stated and well-justified? Suggestions?

If you never done peer review before, you may find it helpful to review the following guidelines.

1. Guidelines for Peer Review

Few writers can rely on their own judgment to know whether something they've written is clear to someone else. For one thing, by the time we finish writing anything, we usually know a lot about the topic. We know it too well to tell whether our presentation would be clear to someone who is reading about the topic for the first time.

Peer editing sessions give writers an opportunity to find out what their writing looks like to someone else. Reviews can help you discover whether what you've written is

(a) appropriate to your purpose and the intended audience
(b) organized and easy to follow
(c) clear, concise, and easy to read

The point of peer editing is not to tell anyone what is "wrong"–a reviewer is merely acting as an interested reader who wants to learn as much as possible from the essay. When you are the reviewer, you should try to ask questions and make comments and offer the kind of feedback that you yourself would find helpful as an author.

While editing your peer's paper, check for the following things:

- *Audience.* Is the writing appropriate to an academic audience, in terms of style, ideas, grammar, etc.?
- *Purpose.* Is the writer's purpose clear?
- *Topic.* Are the topic and the main ideas clear and specific?
- *Support.* Are author's claims well supported? Is there good evidence presented, good examples? Are the ideas developed well? Is there enough information that is specific and relevant to the topic?
- *Specificity.* Are the statements clear, specific, and detailed?
- *Flow.* Do the ideas flow clearly and logically, from the topic sentence, to supporting sentences, to the conclusion? Are sentences well crafted, or are they fragmented, choppy, too short, or too long?
- *Conclusion.* Does the concluding sentence/paragraph wrap up the piece well, without repeating the topic sentence?
- *Transitions.* Does the writer effectively use transitions between sentences and between ideas?
- *Effectiveness.* Does the paper do a good job of informing you?

2. When You Are The Reader

Here are some suggestions for approaching a piece of writing as a peer editor.

(a) *Always read through the piece twice.* Use your first time through just to get familiar with the piece. Your second reading is the opportunity to really try to understand what is being said and how. If you still aren't sure, after two readings, the writer needs to know.

(b) *Take the role of the intended reader.* What writers need most is someone who will read in the same way as the intended reader will: that is, someone who is reading for content, not errors. The most valuable editing advice concerns content, organization, and style. Peer editors whose only comments are about punctuation, mechanics, or spelling may help a writer to produce a more correct piece of writing which still fails to be clear or engaging.

(c) *Avoid "fixing the problem".* Your role as the peer reviewer is not to fix problems you find, but to bring them to the author's attention. Do not take on the writer's work as your own. The biggest help you can offer is to point out what works and what doesn't work for you as a reader.

(d) *Be honest yet constructive.* It can be hard to say what you really think about a piece of writing. It's often tempting to say "looks fine to me", but then your writer will learn nothing from the exercise. A good approach is to start by telling the writer what you like, and then mention what doesn't work for you. Be tentative: rather than saying, "this is really muddled", try something like "I couldn't quite figure out what this sentence meant".

(e) *Be specific.* Try not to make blanket judgments like "the whole thing is really hard to understand" or vague comments like "your descriptions are OK". Instead, try to be specific: "I had hard time figuring out your point about income inequality", and "this list really makes the requirements clear". In any case, try to explain **why** something worked or didn't work for you.

3. WHEN YOU ARE THE WRITER

Here are some suggestions for how you can get the most out of having a peer editor review your work.

(a) *Explain the purpose and describe the intended audience.* Always describe the purpose and the intended audience to your peer editor, as well as any other information that will help your editor to understand what the reader of the piece might need.

(b) *Take advantage of the opportunity.* Writers benefit from the feedback they get from peer editors, even if they don't like it much at the time. When you write, try to think of your work as open to revision. Take advantage of having someone read your work to make what you write clearer and more readable.

(c) *Ask when you don't understand.* Feel free to ask your editor for a clarification if you find the person's comments too vague or otherwise unclear. Similarly, if your peer editor says what you've written "looks fine", feel free to ask about specific parts of your draft: "Do you think my introduction clearly states the purpose of the piece?"

(d) *Don't take it personally.* If you feel rather bruised by the comments of your peer editor, remind yourself that the comments are about a piece of writing, not about you. If someone finds your writing unclear, confusing, muddled, repetitive, plain boring, or repetitive, that's just one person's opinion. Accept it and see what you can do to correct it.

(e) *Feel free to decline.* If you've considered your editor's advice and didn't find it helpful, you are always free to ignore it. This is not the same as disregarding a suggestion upfront: usually, if a reader says there's a problem, it's worth taking a careful look.