

## **Peer Revision in Academic Writing: One Teacher's Experience (Summary)**

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Peer revision is an important part of the teaching and learning experience in the Integrated English Program (IE). During the first semester of the second year, students enroll in IE III: Writing in which they learn to write classification and persuasive essays, are introduced to the MLA bibliographic style, and learn how to incorporate and cite quotations in their work. During the second semester in Academic Writing, they learn how to write a research paper. Learning to write academic English is not easy; however, by following an explicit, step-by-step process of guided instruction most students can learn to write well-structured, readable essays and reports. Moreover, motivation, class atmosphere, and the overall learning experience can be greatly enhanced through the use of peer revision in a cooperative learning environment. Here are the steps:

- 1. Establishing a routine and setting goals:** Students' feel more comfortable and experience less classroom anxiety when they clearly know the goals and structure of the course and the format of each day's lesson: what is going to be done, why they are doing it, and when they are going to do it. In my classes last year, students quickly got used to a standard lesson format: (1) Greeting attendance, homework confirmation, etc. (2) Explanation of today's agenda written on the board. (3) Teacher-led, whole-group instruction using the textbook or handouts. (4) Pair or small group activity with on-going teacher monitoring and help, and occasional one-to-one consultations. (5) Whole-group follow-up activity. (6) Explanation of homework for next week's class.
- 2. Explicit instruction and comprehension:** Among the greatest obstacles to effective peer revision are lack of comprehension and confusion about what and how to do it. Instruction is more likely to be effective when (1) the pace is not too fast; (2) oral explanation is accompanied by having the students follow along, mark, and annotate the text (e.g., underline, double-underline, wavy underline, circle); and (3) the teacher uses plenty of concrete examples, restatements, and repetition. Liberal use of the chalkboard (e.g., drawing graphic organizers and writing down key words and instructions) also enhances comprehension.
- 3. Modeling:** Before beginning pair or small-group work, it is important to clearly model how to do the activity. Walk through the process step-by-step. First the teacher does it. Then the teacher calls on students one by one. In many cases, the activity goes more smoothly if the instructions are written on the board with examples and the key words are highlighted with colored chalk (underline, boxes, etc.).
- 4. Cooperative learning and monitoring:** Following the modeling phase, students work in pairs or groups when doing the peer revision. Using the instructions written on the chalkboard or guidelines in the textbook, students take turns reading aloud each sentence and performing the indicated tasks. Instructions are usually in the form of questions that students ask each other. Peer revision done in this way becomes a lively period of oral interaction. The teacher constantly monitors the process and frequently engages individual students in conversation to check understanding and establish rapport.