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ENGL 365: Technical Writing

Secs. 007, 008, 011, 012

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Online Peer Review Guidelines

1. Recognize that draft criticism is not criticism of a person and or of that person’s abilities. This class does not attempt to teach all types of writing, nor indeed, could any class attempt to do so. The draft you are reviewing could be written by someone who excels at poetry and math but struggles with academic writing. This means that their poetry and math literacies are not utilized in this class, but it does not follow that these “outside” literacies are invalid or useless. Also, remember that when you read a draft from a classmate most of the time you have no way of knowing how much time or energy they spent in composing it. So if you are critical of the draft that does not necessarily mean that your criticism means that the student whose work you are reviewing is incapable of completing the assignment with the rigor necessary for this class. It could be that the student only spent a minimal amount of time with the draft and intends to devote more time to revision for the final draft, in which case your critical feedback will help them revise their work.

2. Double check the prompt before correcting a draft. It is important that you make sure that you understand the assignment before you claim that your peer misunderstood the assignment. In some cases, you could be mistaken about the assignment and your peer could have been correct originally and s/he will change the assignment to reflect your critique leading to both of you misunderstanding the prompt.

3. Be substantive. Your comments should be at least 4 or 5 full, complete sentences. Your feedback should not just offer vague statements of praise or critique but point specifically to how a draft could be improved. After reading your feedback, your classmate should have some strategies for how to improve their draft. In order to provide feedback like this you will have to provide your interpretation of the texts discussed in your classmate’s draft as well as draw on your own life experiences.

4. Be positive. You should have at least one positive thing to say for each draft that you review. Please avoid rude language when composing your feedback. Your feedback should be something that you would be comfortable saying to a person’s face in real life. A splash of positivity (but not universal praise) is an incentive for self-improvement in academic writing.