

USING PEER REVIEW TO IMPROVE STUDENT WRITING SUPPLEMENT 8: GUIDELINES FOR THE PROCESS FOR CRITICAL RESPONSE

Guidelines for the Process for Critical Response

This method of giving feedback was developed for the performance arts discipline. It promotes a dialogue-oriented workshop that helps writers to generate ideas for further developing their work-in-progress. The goal is to offer feedback based on the questions asked by the writer and to offer feedback in the form of neutral questions rather than critical statements. Be sure to follow the core steps closely as each step has particular guidelines for the form and tone of the response being offered.

Core Steps

Step 1. Affirmation or “Statements of Meaning”

During this step, the responders share what was “meaningful, evocative, interesting, exciting, striking” in the work they just experienced. Other adjectives that might be useful: compelling, engaging, convincing, moving. To avoid overly general comments, responders should be specific in their affirmation and provide reasons for their response. For example, “I found the essay to be interesting,” is too general. A better comment might be “I found the way that you analyzed the evidence in paragraph three to be interesting because it made me see the evidence differently.”

Step 2. The Writer as Questioner

During this step, the writer asks questions of the audience based on his/her concerns about the work. For example, “What argument did you think I was making by the end?” or “Do you think I provided enough evidence?” The responders should answer only the questions asked by the writer. They may offer a critical opinion as long as they do not make a suggestion for change.

Step 3. The Reader as Questioner

During this step, the responders ask the writer questions about the work. The artist responds to these questions after they are asked. The questions asked must be *neutral*. For example, if a responder has a question about some lack in the thesis statement, the question “Why is the thesis more like a statement than an argument?” is not neutral. A better question might be “What guided the creation of your thesis statement?”

Step 4: Opinion Time

During this step, the responders may now offer opinions about the work to the writer, but only with the writer’s expressed permission. Responders should preface each opinion with the question: “I have an opinion about _____, would you like to hear it?” It is up to the writer if they would like to hear this opinion. If they are not ready to hear an opinion on the topic being offered, they may say no.

These steps are taken from the Dance Exchange website.

<http://danceexchange.org/projects/critical-response-process/>