CHAPTER 3.

A TROUBLED PRACTICE: THREE MODELS OF PEER REVIEW AND THE PROBLEMS UNDERLYING THEM

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Although peer review is a practice that is closely associated with the writing process movement of the seventies and early eighties, it is now widely adopted by both high school and college classrooms without regard to any particular pedagogy. But if peer review has been a constant even as the discipline has changed, it has remained a troubled practice, with both teachers and students often expressing frustration and dissatisfaction with its results. In this chapter, I will argue that this dissatisfaction stems in large part from the problematic nature of the goals underlying peer review. At times, these goals have not been well articulated; at other times, they have not been shared between students and teachers; and finally, these goals, both articulated and unarticulated may not be achievable, particularly within first year composition courses.

In considering the goals and resulting practices of peer review, I will examine it from the perspective of three different models:

1. **The Collaborative Model** which emerged from the writing process movement and posits the goal of peer review as a community of readers helping the writer to discover their meaning.
2. **The Proxy Model** which posits that the goal of peer review is not to help the writer discover their purpose but rather to improve their text so that they will meet the requirements of the instructor. While this model predates the process-movement, it has never been far from high school and college writing instruction, and it has made a resurgence in an era where teachers and administrators are concerned with measurable growth and accountability.
3. **The Disciplinary/Professional Model** which has emerged more recently and posits that the goal of peer review is to familiarize students with a specific rhetorical genre and an academic and professional practice.

The first two models are largely incompatible with each other, though that doesn't mean that they don't co-exist in many writing classrooms where writing teachers have not fully understood and theorized their goals. The third model is a thoughtful and theoretically grounded attempt to work through some of the problems and contradictions of the prior models, though I will argue that it is ultimately unsuccessful in doing so. In spite of their differences, each of these models holds out the same promise of peer review as a transformative practice. Each model is underpinned by the idea that students can learn from each other and that by sharing and responding to each other's writing, they can begin to change their understanding of what writing is and how writing works in a way that would not be possible if they received feedback from their writing instructor alone. However, for each model, this promise runs up against a hard truth: that students, at best, struggle to understand the transformation that is being asked of them and, at worst, resist this transformation.

THE COLLABORATIVE MODEL

Peer review, as it emerged from the pedagogy of the process movement, emphasized the writer's authority over their own text and often insisted that writing instructors needed to diminish their presence in order to make room for the writer to claim this authority. For early advocates of peer review, the authenticity of the writer's relationship with readers was more important than the instructor's expertise, and the teacher's presence posed a danger to the relationship between the writer and readers. Peter Elbow wrote about the power of getting feedback from "fellow students who were no more expert than themselves" (*Writing Without Teachers*, xx). Other compositionists warned that the teacher's presence posed a danger to writers seeking reactions from readers. Donald Murray stressed that "The teacher must give the responsibility for the text to the writer, making clear again and again that it is the student, not the teacher, who decides what the writing means" (34). Lil Brannon and C.H. Knoblauch warned that the "normal and dynamic relationship between a writer's authority and a reader's attention" is likely to be disrupted by "the peculiar relationship between teacher and student" (158). These composition scholars' concern with writers claiming authority and readers helping them to do so without the undue interference of instructors was crucial to creating the dynamics of peer response groups in the era of process pedagogy. The label most often associated with such a process was "writing workshop," a term that evoked graduate programs in creative writing where writers shared and reacted to each other's work. In addition to borrowing some of the pedagogy of these workshops, the term also worked to confer a sense of agency and prestige that was absent from freshman composition at the time.

The importance of student-to-student collaboration was emphasized by Kenneth Bruffee, who, in his 1984 article, "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind,'" attempted to articulate the theoretical underpinnings of peer review by focusing on the term "collaborative learning." Like the process theorists before him, Bruffee highlighted the importance of students learning from each other. Still, he also articulated the social constructionist perspective that knowledge in a discipline is not passed down by instruction but created through community life. The key to community, Bruffee suggested, is conversation. "What students do when working collaboratively on their writing is not write or edit, or, least of all, read proof. What they do is converse" (Bruffee 645).

But what *kind* of conversation was likely to lead to the outcomes these compositionists desired? For Elbow, at least, the answer was a conversation that valued both the goals and intentions of the writer and the richness and complexity of the writing process itself. Elbow, in particular among the process theorists, has been labeled (sometimes derisively) an expressivist for his interest in student writing that centers on thoughts and experiences. However, where Elbow is most clearly an expressivist is not so much in the kind of writing he advocates (for he also encourages student writing that grapples with ideas) but in the language he uses for describing the writing process itself and in his suggestions for forms of response that take place in peer review. He relies heavily on metaphors, comparing the writing process to cooking (*Writing Without Teachers*) and to wrestling with a snake without killing it (*Writing with Power*), and he also encourages students to use metaphor in their responses to each other's writing (*Sharing and Responding*). Furthermore, Elbow asserts that the kind of feedback students often need most is descriptive feedback—not judgments about whether their writing is good or not but an account of how their writing affects readers. (This position is most clearly articulated in *Sharing and Responding* by the feedback technique that Elbow and Belanoff call "Movies of the Reader's Mind.")

There is much in this collaborative model of peer review that speaks to teachers like me who began their careers influenced by process pedagogy: the idea of empowering students to claim agency over their own learning, the prestige of writing as the kind of rewarding activity that is practiced in creative writing workshops, and the framing of the writing process as something rich and complex rather than rote and formulaic. Yet many of us have found that centering a first-year composition class around the collaborative model of peer review is highly problematic. One problem comes from the artifacts we create in order to guide peer response groups. While we may envision our prompts and worksheets as open-ended and encouraging writerly conversations, they may be more controlling than we think. Mark Hall describes just such a discovery in his article, "The Politics of Peer Response" when he looks at his own worksheet and tries

to analyze it not as a set of neutral prompts that allow students to discover the meaning within their texts but rather as a document whose ideological agenda is hidden. Read through this lens, he concludes that "the entire worksheet shows evidence—not of the liberating, student-centered pedagogy I intend—but of the worst sort of controlling and domesticating educational practice" (6) and that "students may be so busy serving my interests in filling out the worksheet that peer response fails to meet their need to talk and to listen actively to each other about their writing" (8). By insisting that student response be guided by his questions, Hall realized that he was substituting his authority for their goals and values and cutting off the kind of student-centered conversation necessary for real collaboration. In an article about students' perceptions of peer review, Charlotte Brammer and Mary Rees come to the same conclusion: that handouts with lists of questions lead to "a lot of writing but little interaction" (79). In response to this problem, Hall, speculates on the possibility of students being asked to create their own set of questions for peer review.

In my experience, however, the difficulty with trying to guide students through the peer review process is not so much a problem of me imposing my goals and values on them as it is their reluctance to embrace the idea of writing as a collaborative act. Rather than viewing writing as a process of discovering and working out their own ideas, sharing those ideas with each other, and entering a conversation about how meaning is made, they hold onto the current-tradition-alist view of writing that has been reinforced by textbooks, high school teachers, and standardized tests. They see writing as a set of static forms and features such as narrative or persuasive essays and introductions, thesis statements, transitions, and conclusions. Far from appropriating their texts, when I give them prompts that ask them to describe and respond to each other's writing, they simply ignore my questions and default to their earlier view of writing by either proofreading each other's papers or badly approximating their idea of teacher talk: making one-size-fits-all suggestions such as "add more details" or "use more examples." While it might be argued that as a writing teacher my job is to help them leave this old model of the writing process behind and replace it with a more dynamic one, this sort of persuasion is an uphill battle to say the least. Not only are most students more comfortable with directive feedback than they are with the ambiguity of a writerly conversation; their entire experience with education has been in support of this type of learning. Moreover, even if I could persuade them to see writing differently, the university at large does not support a collaborative model of learning and does not reinforce the idea that writing is a way of making meaning. Teaching students using a collaborative model of peer review contradicts the social and institutional spaces in which they have been raised and in which they will be asked to do their work. It is no wonder then that when they

are asked to participate in peer review activities, they react with a mixture of confusion, frustration, apathy, or occasionally even hostility.

As to Hall's suggestion that students be invited to create their own set of questions for peer review, this idea pre-supposes both that students have a framework for imagining such questions in the first place and that, in the second place, they would be willing participants in this process if they could be. In fact, I have tried something similar: having students construct their own rubrics for articulating their goals and evaluating their own writing. My students were confused and frustrated by this process because they were used to writing assignments where the goals were established by the instructor. They lacked a vocabulary and conceptual framework for articulating goals and criteria, and when after some initial hesitation and confusion about what I was asking them to do, they completed the assignment, their rubrics mimicked overly general goals that they had been required to meet in previous assignments such as "having clear ideas," "writing without mistakes," and "conveying my point." In short, the advocates of the collaborative model of peer review all emphasize the role of conversation among students who identify themselves and each other as writers with a sense of agency and authority, but my experience has been that the students themselves are unlikely to understand the terms or share the goals of this kind of conversation.

THE PROXY MODEL

In this model of peer review, the goal is not for students to collaborate with each other in order to work out the meaning of a text but rather to read each other's writing and reach an approximation of the teacher's goals and values. Students' judgments of their peers' writing are proxies for the judgments of their instructor, and the goal of peer review is not a conversation about how writing works on multiple readers but rather a judgment about how well writing reflects the instructor's values and meets their standards. Thus, the prompts for the proxy model of peer review are likely to be aimed at identifying strengths and weaknesses and at augmenting the former and fixing the latter.

This model of peer review reflects a kind of traditionalist instruction that pre-dates the process movement but that, in truth, continues to be present in high school and college writing classes. While writing courses have adopted peer review as a practice, they may not have adopted the goals and values of Elbow, Bruffee et al. In fact, in his reconsideration of the history of writing groups, Kory Lawson Ching suggests that in spite of the process movement's focus on student collaboration, "peer response may not have emerged so much out of a move to decenter classroom authority but instead as a way for students to share some of the teacher's burden" ("Peer Response" 308).

But whether the goal is burden sharing or teaching students to understand and imitate institutional values, the proxy model of peer review does not align well with the theories of discourse and knowledge creation described by theorists like Bruffee. However, as the writing process movement has faded into the romantic past and with the move towards standardized testing, rubrics, and institutional accountability, this model has gained traction and even a certain amount of credibility, if not in the discipline of composition and rhetoric, then at least in schools of education. In particular, I've noticed over the last decade how the term "actionable feedback" has entered the lexicon in education. I first encountered this term in a 2012 article by Grant Wiggins in the journal *Educational Leadership* entitled "Seven Keys to Effective Feedback." Wiggins argues that an essential quality of good feedback is that it must be "actionable":

> Effective feedback is concrete, specific, and useful; it provides actionable information. Thus, 'Good job!' and 'You did that wrong' and B+ are not feedback at all. We can easily imagine the learners asking themselves in response to these comments, What *specifically* should I do more or less of next time, based on this information? No idea. They don't know what was "good" or "wrong" about what they did. (4-5)

Wiggins' article has been widely cited by teaching blogs as well as by articles and consultants in business management that aim to improve employees' performance by providing them with more efficient feedback. Underlying the idea of "actionable feedback" is the assumption that the eventual goal, both in the classroom and the workplace, is to help the student or employee to improve in the opinion of their teacher/supervisor. "Actionable" means that the person receiving the feedback can make changes in order to improve their standing in the eyes of the person doing the evaluating. Whereas the collaborative model emphasizes student agency and warns against the teacher appropriating the student's text, the proxy model accepts the teacher's institutional authority and sees peer review as a tool for teaching students to reproduce their values and judgments about writing in order to achieve academic success.

While it abandons the student-centered pedagogy of the collaborative model, the proxy model has the advantage of more closely aligning with the goals of many students, particularly those in freshman writing classes. When I ask my students at the beginning of each semester what they expect to happen in my college writing course, most of them say that they want and expect to receive feedback that will make their writing better. I always end each course that I teach by giving students a survey where I list a number of activities we have done over

the semester and ask them to rate the usefulness of each. In the twenty years I have been giving this survey, not a single class has rated the usefulness "peer feedback" as equal to or greater than the usefulness of "feedback from the instructor." Students tend to see the role of feedback as to improve their performance, and since I am the evaluator, they value my feedback more highly than that of their peers. In other words, even after a semester in which I use the language of process pedagogy and in which I try to complicate the model of the writing process that they have brought with them from high school, they continue to align themselves with the proxy model rather than with the collaborative model. For this reason alone, in spite of its shortcomings, the proxy model may be worth writing teachers' reconsideration.

Of course, a major difficulty of this model of feedback is that students do not make good proxies for teachers. They do not possess the same evaluative criteria that we do, and they often misinterpret or misapply those criteria when they give feedback. This gap, however, can be a useful opportunity for teachers to examine and make explicit the criteria that we use to evaluate student writing. I have found that within limited circumstances, the proxy model of peer review can improve students understanding of specific disciplinary conventions and rhetorical moves.

One example of this has been the kind of peer review process I have used in my introductory freshman literature course. I ask student groups to review each other's rough drafts against a specific set of criteria that is particularly relevant to the genre of literary analysis. The first time I used this process, I outlined four different criteria for students to evaluate. However, students struggled so much with this feedback that I quickly cut the criteria to two items. I ask reviewers to identify a thesis or, if no thesis is clear, to suggest one that the rest of the draft might point to. And I also ask them to identify specific places where the writer analyzes the readings as well as places where they merely summarize, pointing to specific examples of each.

Students post their drafts and their feedback to their classmates online so that I can read them. I don't respond to the draft at this stage of the writing process, but I do give each student's feedback to their classmate a score from 1-4 as well as a brief explanation for my score. The scores do not count towards the students' grades, but I tell them that they are important because they indicate an understanding (or lack thereof) of the criteria I will apply to their final drafts. I tell them that if they score a 3 or 4, then they are well underway to understanding my requirements for success in their papers. If they score lower than that, then they should review those criteria, and possibly we should meet to discuss their misunderstanding. Depending on the class I am teaching, students go through this peer review process 3-4 times over the semester.

Looking back over the six classes that I have taught using this method, I can see that between their first peer review group and their final one, the average student's feedback score improved from 1.9 to 2.8, not a dramatic improvement, perhaps, but a significant one. However, in addition to seeing students become better peer reviewers, the class benefited from a more thorough discussion of some of the criteria that were central to success in the papers that students wrote for the course. The process of peer review became the vehicle through which students and I defined and applied the criteria I articulated as the key to success for the genre. This process harnesses students' preconceptions that it's the instructor with expertise that they need to look to for guidance while also valuing the process of peer review group as the site for understanding and applying these criteria. It also mitigates students' concerns that their classmates do not know enough to give good peer reviews by letting them know that I am overseeing the process and entering the discussion after the reviews have been given. At this point in the process, I respond only to the reviews and not to the drafts themselves.

The advantage of assessing peer reviews rather than initial student drafts is that it conveys that the idea that peer review is valuable not for its ability to offer the *writer* useful advice that will improve her paper but for the opportunity it presents to the *reviewer* to see and to assess the variety of strategies that other student writers deploy and to understand the criteria for successful writing so that they might apply it to their own drafts. Indeed, this peer review benefit is emphasized by a number of contemporary scholars. In her article, "Peer Review for Peer Review's Sake: Resituating Peer Review Pedagogy," E. Shelley Reid emphasizes this shift in focus "from the possible products of peer review . . . to the gains made during the *process* of peer review itself" (218). Reid argues that reviewers benefit as much or more than writers because "they learn to understand a new writing task the way professionals learn, by closely reviewing multiple examples in the genre" (220). Melissa Meeks picks up on Reid's shift in focus from writer to reviewer, referring to reviewers' ability to understand and apply specific criteria for success as "giver's gain," and concluding that "Students who can talk to peers about the criteria are best able to apply them to their own work" (Meeks, "Give One, Get One").

However, although the proxy model can have some benefits, it also has significant limitations. For one, although some scholars complain that peer review may have become an entrenched practice for overworked teachers as a form of labor sharing, the process I have described certainly does not have that advantage. Peer review is only labor saving if it requires less intervention from instructors than reading and responding to student drafts. This process required me to read all of my students' drafts as well as all of the feedback given by their

classmates. I usually put students into groups of 3-4, so that meant reading 2-3 peer reviews for every draft. Admittedly, these were short, initial drafts, and I didn't respond to the drafts themselves but only the peer reviews. Still, this process took somewhat longer than simply responding to each draft alone. A common refrain in the scholarship on peer review is that it requires more time spent training students in how to read and respond to each other, and this was clearly true in my classes. Moreover, in order for my version of peer review to succeed, I had to limit its focus to understanding and improving particular genre features. While these review criteria were useful in the context of a literature classroom, it's debatable whether they would transfer to another writing situation. Formulating and supporting a thesis is a highly disciplinary activity, and to the degree that this kind of proxy feedback is useful in a literature course, it is probably much less so in a class like freshman writing that attempts a wider variety of writing tasks.

Finally, this kind of peer review crowds out other writing issues, including a more freewheeling discussion of the content of their writing. Even focusing on just four criteria proved overwhelming to my students and forced me to narrow my focus to the two above. An investment in certain types of peer feedback is also a decision not to spend time on other aspects of a class, an opportunity cost that any teacher must consider. And, of course, the proxy model defines writing almost entirely as meeting the expectations of an evaluator—itself an impoverished view of the writing process and one that minimizes student agency.

THE DISCIPLINARY/PROFESSIONAL MODEL

In the past two decades, some composition scholars have sought to address the conflicting goals of the collaborative and proxy models. These scholars seek to reframe peer review neither as a path for the student to claim authority and agency as a writer nor as an unquestioning submission to teacher authority, but rather as an academic and professional practice that students can analyze and emulate. There is substantial work being done from this perspective, but I would like to address articles by three scholars whom I think make interesting suggestions and whom I think are fairly representative of this new approach to peer review: Elizabeth Parfitt, Mark Hall, and Kory Lawson Ching.

In "Establishing the Genre of Peer Review" Elizabeth Parfitt outlines a class in which short writing assignments exist in large part as springboards at first for peer reviews of those assignments and later for longer written assignments where students rhetorically analyze their own peer reviews. Through analysis and discussion of their own reviews, the students learn what an effective example of the genre looks like. Parfitt justifies her emphasis on this genre over others by

arguing that peer review best exemplifies the kind of professional activity that students may encounter outside of the writing classroom:

> Framing peer review as a genre with its own rhetorical components allows students to begin thinking about their writing as professional. When professional writers receive reviews of their work, they are presented with multiple voices, opinions, and often requests asking the author to respond by prioritizing statements of critique they deem most useful for the given purpose and audience. (2)

I mentioned Mark Hall earlier in this chapter as a teacher who realized that his attempts to guide students through prompts and worksheets were not liberating but rather overly controlling. In "The Politics of Peer Review," Hall replaces them with a series of "gateway activities" that he believes will lead the class to an examination of peer review as a practice. He first asks students about their prior experiences with peer review and has them compile a list of what sorts of feedback are effective or ineffective. Then he selects student texts and gives feedback to them alongside of his students, and he asks them to compare his comments and responding strategies with theirs. Finally, he has them revisit to and revise their original list of criteria for effective responses. Like Parfitt, Hall wants to make the practice of peer review more central to the writing classroom. He believes that this series of activities makes the process of peer review visible and open to interrogation.

Kory Lawson Ching is another scholar who argues for making the practice of peer feedback explicit and visible. Like Hall, Ching argues that instructors can never really remove their authority from peer review groups because their presence will always be felt through their evaluative criteria and reproduced in peer review groups by "(problematic and incomplete) mimicry" (24). Whereas Hall creates "gateway activities" to initiate students into a discussion of peer review strategies, Ching suggests that replacing peer-only groups with instructor-led groups creates a "contact zone" where the norms and practices of peer response can be exposed and questioned. Ching explains how having the instructor lead peer review groups builds on familiar relationships in the writing classroom (reviewer-writer and instructor-writer) by adding a new relationship (instructor-reviewer). He argues that this relationship "potentially complicates received notions of authority, autonomy, and ownership" (21) by highlighting the instructor's dual role as both collaborator and guide:

> Part of this relationship is collaborative (or at least cooperative), in that both the instructor and the student-reviewers are mutually engaged in the activity of offering feedback to the writer. But

> this relationship is also instructional, in that another objective of the peer conference is that reviewers learn, with guidance and assistance from the instructor, how to generate that feedback. (23)

These scholars share a number of assumptions and practices that differentiate them from the earlier collaborative and proxy models. They all recognize that students bring with them outmoded and ineffective approaches to peer review and believe that these approaches must be replaced through explicit instruction. In order to do so, they present models of practice that increase the time spent on peer review in a writing class, often arguing that the peer review assignment should receive equal or greater attention than the "real" texts that are reviewed. The quotation marks around the word "real" appear in Parfitt's article and demonstrate these scholars' rejection of the idea that peer review is ancillary to other types of writing rather than a legitimate genre itself. For them, there is no writing activity more real than peer review. These scholars recognize the issue of student authority as problematic, but they reject both the collaborative model's belief that student agency will be enhanced if the instructor's role in response is effaced and also the proxy model's implicit assumption that peer groups can replicate the teacher's values and standards without first understanding peer review as a disciplinary practice that is rhetorically situated. They respond to the problem of authority by adopting peer review strategies that make the practice and the teacher's modes of responding more visible and thus subject to questioning and analysis. To this end, they not only make the practice the subject of scrutiny but also analyze the "review" as a specific genre of writing. Finally, they note that older practices of peer review have failed because they have not generated the kind of conversation that Kenneth Bruffee claimed was necessary for collaborative learning to take place. When such conversation is missing, peer review becomes merely an exercise in copy editing. Contemporary peer review theorists address the problem of "conversation" by attempting to model and initiate students into a particular *kind* of conversation—not the "writerly" conversation of early peer review advocates like Elbow and Murray, but a conversation shaped and guided by instructors and one which represents peer review as a disciplinary and professional practice.

There is much about this new approach to peer review that I find interesting and admirable. I have a great deal of respect for these scholars' honesty about the problems of collaboration and authority and their attempts to make these issues visible and subject to questioning. However, it seems to me that the disciplinary/ professional model of peer review is no more likely to persuade students to adopt it than earlier models. It recognizes that in order for peer review to work, teachers need to engage students in a conversation about writing, but its success depends upon students being any more interested in the kind of conversation that

it proposes than they were in the kinds of complex conversations about writing favored by the collaborative model. Rather than asking them to imagine themselves as writers pursuing their own goals, it asks them to imagine themselves engaging in the discourse practices of other kinds of communities—academic and professional. Based on my experience with students, particularly freshmen, the idea that they can be enticed to join a conversation because it represents the discourse of the academy or of some imagined eventual employer strikes me as unrealistic. Perhaps recognizing the enormity of this task, the proponents of the disciplinary/professional model advocate making training in peer review the central focus of the writing class and devoting much more time to it. But this means spending less time focusing on other aspects of the writing process, and it means entirely reframing the process of sharing and responding to each other's writing around a set of goals that students may be reluctant to embrace.

CONCLUSION

All three models of peer review have drawbacks that may be insurmountable because teachers and students simply do not share the same goals for peer review, and persuading students to adopt a new set of goals and practices is extremely difficult work. Despite teachers' best efforts, students hang on to their "practical" model of peer review. They tend to want reliable, authoritative, "actionable" feedback that allows them to make specific changes to a draft in order to get a better grade on the next one. Moreover, while many peer review advocates have argued that teachers should devote more time in their classes to train students in peer review and that the process should occupy a more central focus in the classroom, this shift in emphasis comes at a cost: it crowds out other kinds of writing and other activities that writing teachers view as useful.

Yet, despite these problems, peer review deserves to be an important part of any writing class. Peer review deadlines force students to commit less than perfect writing to the page and to share their works-in-progress with an audience. The act of hearing your words read to others is an important part of the writing process even with less than perfect feedback or with none at all. As Elbow puts it, "Surely what writers need most is the experience of being heard . . ." (3). An additional benefit is that whatever feedback and discussion emerges from peer review groups can be a window for teachers into how students are grappling with writing assignments. When teachers can access this feedback, either by observing peer review groups in the class, collecting written reviews, or by overseeing peer review groups online, we can adjust our planning in the rest of the course to more effectively meet students where they are. And finally, as writing scholars like E. Shelley Reid and Melissa Meeks remind us, the process of peer review

may be more important for the student giving feedback than the student receiving it. By reading other students' work and considering what responses to give, students come to understand the writing assignment and to consider various ways of responding to it that potentially benefit their own writing.

All of these are good reasons to continue to make ample use of peer review. However, none of them require us to adopt the stance that so many scholars have advocated over the history of all of these models—that we need to devote more time to peer review and make training a more central focus of the writing classroom. Instead, we ought to admit that trying to shift students' modes of peer response through worksheets, training, modeling, rhetorical analysis, or any other technique is unlikely to succeed. This admission allows us up to stop worrying that peer review will yield the kind of results that we insist on and frees us up to reap the benefits of peer review listed in the paragraph above.

Moreover, it also addresses the problems of agency and authority that have plagued peer review since its inception. When teachers stop trying to impose a set of practices or responses on peer review groups, it allows us to be more transparent about our authority at other stages of the writing process. In my writing classes, I have students discuss their experiences with peer review, and when the inevitable reservations come up and they say that they don't trust themselves or their classmates to give good advice, I tell them not to worry about it. I tell them that it's my job as a teacher to give them that advice, which I will do in conferences and in my written comments, and that they should use peer review groups as a chance to share their writing and test it out on readers.

In spite of my early allegiance to the collaborative model of peer review, I accept the lesson of the disciplinary/professional model that we cannot efface our own authority nor expect that our absence will somehow coax students into a more authentic ownership of their own writing. The three models of peer review above all attempt to persuade students to adopt a particular set of goals and practices—although some of these models are more transparent about their agendas than others. I have come to believe that peer review is a poor venue in which to try to enact this kind of persuasion and that it is more useful to envision the writing class in terms of different spaces: the peer review group, which is relatively free of my prescriptions for particular kinds of feedback, and the rest of the class (including readings, discussion, other writing activities and assignments, and my comments to student writing) in which I can be clear about my values, beliefs, and expectations.

This past semester I asked students in my freshman writing class to write a reflective piece about how their writing was affected by readers in different stages of the revision process. In their reflection, one of the students distinguished between the responses they received in their peer review group and the responses they received from me. They wrote: "Your reaction as a teacher guided me towards where

I should be going as in comparison where my classmates are only able to give me the feedback as to where I currently am." This student's use of the word *only* indicates the preference common among students for the "usefulness" of teacher feedback to steer them towards a better grade. But while I used to view such an attitude as a failure of peer review as a collaborative process, I now see it as a useful distinction. If the student can rely on my guidance and authority in the future ("where I should be going,") then they are more likely to listen to readers discuss his writing in the present ("where I currently am"). By not placing pressure on peer review to enact the kind of conversation that I want, I hope to create a space where students can share their writing and where conversation may happen on their own terms.

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