



Use of Student Peer Review in a Writing-Intensive Fashion Course

Jung-ha Yang, West Virginia University

In today's job market, there is an increased demand for hiring college graduates who possess appropriate writing skills for business (Solomon, 2018). Fashion students can benefit from having adequate writing skills in pursuing a job in the fashion industry. In order to meet such demands in writing skills and to have a better chance at getting a desired job, fashion students can significantly enhance their writing skills pertinent to possible jobs, in an in-major writing intensive course. The current abstract is to share with the fellow fashion educators the pedagogical benefits in adopting student peer review method for a term paper in a fashion merchandising course. Some researchers found the effectiveness of student peer reviews in written assignments (e.g., English as a second language: Paulus, 1999). However, there is a lack of exploration of peer reviews, as an innovative pedagogical strategy, in writing-intensive fashion merchandising courses.

Creative adoption of peer review among students: Peer review is defined as “a process by which something proposed (as for research or publication) is evaluated by a group of experts in the appropriate field” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.). Students may receive help with organization or grammar from any writing assistance provided at University or college level. However, until they receive feedback from the instructor or grader, they may not receive any specific constructive feedback on the content for effective revision of the paper. In this pedagogical strategy of adding peer feedback to instructor feedback for revisions, students can effectively learn how to appropriately write a term paper from peer students, in terms of content of the assignment as well as writing skills. In short, the peer feedback can facilitate critical thinking (Bean, 2011). For example, in a writing-intensive course class of students who are all fashion merchandising majors, it is safe to assume that they share the common interest in fashion merchandising. Therefore, the students can provide more specific constructive feedback to one another, especially regarding the content related to fashion (e.g., fashion trend analysis).

Objective of adoption of the strategy: The purposes of adopting student peer review process, as a part of the process of writing a term paper in a writing-intensive fashion merchandising courses, are as follows: (a) to incorporate more reviews from other people than the instructor/grader, (b) to expand the scope of the reviews to contribute to enhancement of content, (c) and for the students to learn from peer students, to help them enhance their writing.

Implementation of strategy: The suggested pedagogical approach is implemented as follows: First, the guideline for the written assignment, in this case, a term paper, is distributed. In the guideline, there are a set number of midterm due dates for the drafts of the term paper. Students submit their drafts, and print out their written assignment to share with a partner or a group, in class, on the midterm due dates. During the class time, each student will thoroughly read each other's paper based on the assignment guideline. Students will provide each other with a list or description of what they evaluate highly of the

Page 1 of 2

Published under a Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

ITAA Proceedings, #76 - <https://itaaonline.org>

other students' work and what they would suggest. After the student peer feedback, instructor gives his/her feedback. Students are expected to incorporate the feedback into the following draft and subsequently into the final draft.

Description of effectiveness of the strategy in meeting learning objectives: The above pedagogical method of student peer review was implemented in a junior-level writing-intensive fashion merchandising course in the semester of Fall 2018. The writing-intensive course objectives included producing written work appropriate to the discipline through a process that involves drafting and revisions based on feedback. One of the course objectives was to demonstrate competency in conducting merchandising research and solving merchandising problems. In order to examine whether or not the strategy helped meeting the course objective, students provided feedback in the form of completing a survey about the process of writing the term paper. Among the 19 students enrolled, 12 students participated in the survey. The results of the survey revealed that over 90% of the students liked peer feedback built into the process of writing the term paper, and some of the reasons for the favoring the peer feedback included getting new ideas or fresh perspective from fellow students and not only from the instructor, receiving constructive idea in developing merchandising strategies from the students who knows the same rubric, and being able to realize the mistakes that they did not notice before. Almost all the participants did not feel uncomfortable sharing their work with classmates.

The above pedagogical strategy can be effectively implemented in a traditional classroom setting without investing in any additional resources. It can also be expanded into an online or hybrid classroom setting. It is meaningful in that students majoring in specific area of study such as fashion merchandising, can benefit from providing and receiving peer feedback in a written assignment, especially because of their high level of interest in the subject area and the collective effect that can be utilized in a writing-intensive major course. The discussed strategy is believed to be highly effective in training the students to become better writers for their careers in the fashion industry, as demanded by many industry professionals.

References

- Bean, J. C. (2011). *Engaging ideas* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Paulus, T. M. (1999). The effect of peer and teacher feedback on student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8(3), 265-289.
- Peer review. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peer%20review>
- Solomon, G. (August 9, 2018). Why Mastering Writing Skills Can Help Future-Proof Your Career. In *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/gretasolomon/2018/08/09/why-mastering-writing-skills-can-help-future-proof-your-career/#38fae28e5831>