



What's Wrong With It? Helping Students Assess Their Own Creative Work

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ABSTRACT

In the creative writing workshop, peer assessment, marginalia and the discussion of student work are central tenets. Collegial but rigorous feedback is important to the growth of a writing practice.

When students are involved in peer-feedback, they have the opportunity to see what quality writing looks like and to define for themselves whether they've met the expectations set out in an assignment. A culture of revision and of learning together can increase proficiency for giving and receiving critical feedback and help students writers create more sophisticated work.

But the practice of critical peer assessment raises questions of efficacy, since feedback is usually provided to the writer after they've submitted a piece of creative work for workshop. Students sometimes express a sense of frustration and discouragement in receiving comments (Jonsson, 2013; Sommers, 1982). We know feedback on creative work to be useful, but is there more we can do to help students develop critical skills and apply them to their own work?

Students develop self-assessment skills through giving feedback to others (Bostock, 2000; Brown et al., 1994; Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). By providing guidance through the feedback process and evaluating the quality of student feedback, an instructor can help student writers offer stronger formative feedback to their peers and more importantly, help students to better self-assess their own writing (Baker, 2016).

My pedagogy presentation will discuss how to engage and guide students in a peer- and self-review process, and how the process of can help them make more insightful changes to their own drafts. We'll breakdown a scaffolded process for self-assessment to help students understand, interact with and articulate points of craft on a deeper level and recognize that their first submission is a draft that requires significant revision. And through the process of self-assessment, that a student writer learns to cultivate their own aesthetic, to trust their own instincts and eventually create work that connects with their vision for the project.

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