

## Strategies for Peer Review

### Whole Paper and Sentence Level Issues:

- First, focus on high priority (whole paper) issues; then, look at lower priority (sentence level) issues.
- Whole paper issues deal with content and affect the whole paper. Some examples of whole paper issues are the thesis, the ideas, the logic of the argument, the supporting evidence, the organization, and whether the paper meets the assignment requirements.
- Sentence Level Issues deal with grammar, punctuation, phrasing, and formatting.
- There are several ways to identify whole paper issues:
  - Look at the assignment sheet
  - Look at the peer review sheet
  - Look at the grading sheet
  - Ask the student writer what issues he or she would like to discuss.

### Readerly Feedback:

- Readerly feedback informs the writer how his or her message is being received. It is the difference between telling the writer what to do and telling the writer how you understand the text.
- Readerly responses are beneficial for several reasons:
  - Allows the reader to give constructive feedback without being too mean (offensive) or too nice (not saying anything)
  - Allows the writer to maintain ownership of his or her paper; the reader can give constructive feedback without taking over the writer's paper
  - Allows the reader to work with what he or she knows; the reader doesn't have to be a writing expert to give readerly feedback
- Examples of readerly feedback:
  - Ask questions of clarification: "I didn't understand if you meant \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_"; "The way this part was presented led me to conclude \_\_\_\_\_. Is that what you intended?"; "This point seemed to conflict with this part because . . ."
  - Identify parts that are confusing or repetitive: "I was confused here because . . ."
  - Identify parts that you think are strong, interesting, clear, or persuasive.

### Specific Feedback:

- Specific feedback tells the writer *which part* of the text is confusing, (or interesting, repetitive, clear, easy to follow, or in need of clarification) and *why* the reader thinks so.
- If something is "unclear," *why* is it unclear? If something is illogical or doesn't flow, *why*? The more specific the reader's comments, the more helpful they will be for the writer.
- Examples of specific feedback:
  - "I am confused because according to your thesis, you are arguing that we should lower the drinking age; however, you include a statistic showing that most alcohol related car accidents involve people between the ages of 16 and 25. That statistic makes me think the drinking age should be raised."
  - "Your organization was difficult to follow because I expected you to talk about the ideas in the first part of your thesis first, but you didn't discuss them until the middle of your paper."
  - "I thought that your idea about professors having power and students being vulnerable was really interesting, but I wanted to know more details. Why are students vulnerable? Are some students more vulnerable than others? Can you give an example of what you mean?"