The Game of Writing: GWrit

The Game of Writing is a software application developed since 2013 by a team at the University of Alberta to enable students to peer review drafts of their writing before submitting those drafts for grading. Leading internationally-known scholars in gaming and writing studies combined to create this online learning environment that exists independent of a learning management system (LMS) and is therefore open to students at any educational institution. We are currently in our third year of using the system and are beginning to publish research results based on using the system in over a dozen classes with over 1000 students.

Why Peer Review?

Research on peer feedback offers support for peer review as a pedagogical strategy in a wide variety of contexts, including introductory undergraduate courses. It has been well-known since the 1980s that feedback helps writers improve their drafts. In the field of writing studies or composition, much of the 20th century work on response to student writing focused on strategies for instructors to adopt to improve the way they responded to students. Since then, research on peer feedback to student writing has gained interest. As Phillips (see references below) notes, by engaging in assessment students are actually learning crucial lessons about how to write. Peer feedback, then, helps those who receive the comments, as one might expect; perhaps more importantly, it also helps the person giving the feedback improve their writing.

How does it work?

01 Students sign onto the website using their university ID.

02 Administrators enroll them or add them to a course section (or a section devoted to their institution or type of assignment they are working on).

03 Students post a copy of the assignment instructions.

04 Students draft their assignment or post a copy of it in GWrit.

05 Students click "Submit for Review" to enable other students and instructors to view their draft and to comment on their draft.

06 Students navigate to view the drafts of other students and they leave constructive comments for them.

Instructors or tutors can also comment on drafts and indicate (by giving a gold star) which comments students should definitely pay attention to when revising.

Who leads the development team?

• Geoffrey Rockwell, Professor of Philosophy and Humanities Computing
• Roger Graves, Professor and Director, Writing Across the Curriculum
• Heather Graves, Professor and Director, Writing Studies

Where can I find out more about GWrit?

• Email Roger Graves at roger.graves@ualberta.ca
• View a four minute Ignite session here:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Thl6ArqsCxQ
        Note: *the GWrit section starts at* **minute 47.**
• View these slides:
  https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1PI3ng4w7Ng3Ig3f12-xcklWMH9WjQPPZ0r1zQ-FwsYw/edit#slide=id.g137fb4c3fa_0_31
• Read this review of peer feedback for writing development:
  https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HKZVys-nLW-xi5I1WmgcOShDwZXDcvOvRRQjWYr-iaY/edit

Selected Research on Peer Review of Writing

Beach, R. & Friedrich, T. (2006). Response to writing. *In Handbook of writing research*. Ed.Charles A. MacArthur, Steve Graham, & Jill Fitzgerald. New York: Guilford Press. 222-234.

Chen, T. (2016). Technology-supported peer feedback in ESL/EFL writing classes: a research synthesis, *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 29:2, 365-397. DOI: 10.1080/09588221.2014.960942

Cho, Y. H., & Cho, K. (2011). Peer reviewers learn from giving comments. *Instructional Science*, 39(5), 629-643. doi:http://dx.doi.org.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/10.1007/s11251-010-9146-1

Guasch, T., Espasa, A., Alvarez, I.M., & Kirschner, P. A. (2013). Effects of feedback on collaborative writing in an online learning environment, *Distance Education,* 34:3, 324-338, DOI: 10.1080/01587919.2013.835772

Ion, G., Barrera-Corominas, A., & Tomàs-Folch, M. (2016). Written peer-feedback to enhance students' current and future learning. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education,* *13*:15. DOI10.1186/s41239-016-0017-y

Li, L., Liu, X., & Steckelberg, A. L. (2010). Assessor or assessee: How student learning improves by giving and receiving peer feedback. British Journal of Educational Technology, 41, 525–536.

Phillips, F. (2016). The Power of Giving Feedback: Outcomes from implementing an online peer assessment system. *Issues in Accounting Education* 31, 1-15. DOI: 10.2308/iace-50754

Straub, R. (1999). A Selected Bibliography on Teacher Response. *A Sourcebook for Responding to Student Writing*. Cresskills NJ: Hampton Press.

Wang, J. H., Chen, S. Y., Chang, B., & Chan, T.W. (2016). From integrative to game-based integrative peer response: high ability versus low ability. Journal of Computer-assisted Learning, 32, 170–185. doi: 10.1111/jcal.12125