CHAPTER 6.

POSITIONING PEER REVIEW FOR TRANSFER: AUTHENTIC AUDIENCES FOR CAREER READINESS AND WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

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> By [critiquing] my peers work, it gives me different ideas on how to proofread my own writing and comparing it to their writing. Such as, noticing what their weaknesses and what their strongest points are. If my weaknesses are their strongest points or if my strongest points are their weaknesses and take notes on how they express their ideas.
>
> – First-Year Student's Reflective Portfolio Letter

Peer review has long occupied a discrete writing stage in college composition courses. It has helped convey a process-oriented view of writing as recursive and unfinished as well as promoted revision that responds to audience feedback. While peer review continues to occur as a common step in ePortfolio development, no other writing pedagogy since the process movement has placed significant emphasis on peer review praxis. In many areas of writing courses and curricula, peer feedback has lost its prior prominence and alignment with emerging writing pedagogies. As the field of writing studies has moved on from process pedagogy—even with many of its instructional practices still in place, there are new pedagogical vantage points through which to utilize peer review. In particular, exigencies related to job market pressures for students and graduates and new emphases on learning transfer provide a rich new arena in which to consider and reposition peer review in writing courses. Instead of viewing peer review as process-informed student-to-student instruction that recenters student writing and exchange (over current-traditional and "banking" or instructor-focused teaching), we can recognize peer feedback as a workplace genre that cultivates several transferable writing and inter/intrapersonal skills. To do this, writing instructors should first identify the ways that peer review translates into

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the workplace and then utilize transparent teaching and an updated approach to peer review reflection to facilitate learning transfer.

In the excerpt at the beginning of this chapter, a first-year writing student describes several different angles of analysis she used when she read both her peers' drafts and their feedback. She measures her "strengths" and "weaknesses" and also infers "proofreading" strategies from her peers' work. She pays attention to "how" her peers "express their ideas." Her comparative rhetorical approaches to her peers' texts offer useful tools for adapting to new writing demands and forms in work and community spaces. I argue that we should recognize that this writer is developing skills beyond typical peer feedback tasks of providing "readerly feedback" or suggestions on her peer's writing or discussing the effectiveness of her or his rhetorical choices. Instead, she is practicing "soft" or inter -and intrapersonal skills of peer benchmarking strategies that she can use not just in future writing courses but also when she produces unfamiliar workplace genres. These future contexts for applying rhetorical, interpersonal, analytical, and writing skills associated with peer feedback present an opportunity to encourage meta-awareness and transfer of these skills through peer review. Cultivating this student's perceptiveness into both her own and her peers' writing involves a "teaching for transfer" approach to peer review. Teaching for transfer (TFT) draws upon several process-inspired pedagogical roles for peer review and reflection but offers a clearer purpose for peer review that addresses growing demands for learning transfer and learners' own interests in preparing for workplace writing. Despite these connections between peer review and TFT, which this chapter explores, practitioners of transfer pedagogy as a whole have not identified an explicit role for peer review.

Concerns over whether learners are transferring skills and knowledge arise from multiple locations, including classroom-based and program assessment (via instructors and administrators) and also students, families, and employers. Current research into learning transfer paints a murky picture of the afterlife of college writing skills (Moore; Yancey et al.; Jarratt et al.). First-year writing courses have come under scrutiny for adhering to vague, school-based writing situations that fail to provide rich rhetorical contexts and audiences that can foster meta-cognitive skills and transfer (Wardle). Upper-level writing courses similarly raise concerns about students' abilities to apply rhetorical choices that appropriately address community and non-academic audiences (Bacon). Meanwhile, employers are reporting a desire to hire new graduates who can make use of skills and learning beyond the classroom. Hart Research Associates report, "just 14% of employers think that most of today's college students are prepared with the skills and knowledge needed to complete a significant applied learning project before graduation" (6). The same 2015 Hart Research Associates study of employers and college graduates found a disparity between the two groups'

confidence in college students' preparation overall for the workforce: "College students are notably more optimistic about their level of preparedness across learning" compared to their employers (11). These troubling views of writing transfer and other workplace-applied skills open new possibilities for peer review as a multifaceted writing activity that we can leverage for its potential to foster professional writing and interpersonal skills and self-awareness.

In practice, one of the first obstacles writing instructors face with peer review is student resistance to "fixing" other peers' work. This perception derives from two common misconceptions about instructors' aims for assigning peer feedback; both are legacies of peer review's historical dexterity as a pedagogical tool in writing. The first is the vestige of peer review as a feedback-and workload-management strategy for instructors wanting students to have additional opportunities for personalized feedback in large writing classrooms. The second is the association peer review has—for instructors and for students—with high school or first-year (lower level) writing courses. As I will discuss, these are important legacies of peer review's long stronghold in composition courses. David Perkins and Gavriel Salomon's backward- and forward-reaching reflections are useful strategies for encouraging students (and instructors) to reevaluate their understanding of peer feedback, its purpose and value, and to anticipate workplace applications that will aid in their skill transfer. We can update our own and our students' approaches to peer review by being transparent about how peer review applies to workplace writing and career readiness and by implementing backward- and forward-reaching reflection to encourage transfer.

Influential educational researchers David Perkins and Gavrial Salomon proposed in 1988 that transfer of learning could be facilitated by reflecting on both prior and future experiences engaging with related tasks and skills. In this chapter, I adopt these TFT pedagogy concepts on two levels in order to examine the practice of peer review first through a lens of backward- and forward-reaching reflection, considering both historical legacies (reflecting backward) and future/forward-looking uses of peer review. This broad framework enables a second level of application for Perkins and Salomon's concepts: implementing a TFT approach to peer review. On a larger scale of re-examining peer review, when writing instructors look *back* on peer review's historical development, we see that legacies of academic labor constraints combine with documented declines in the use of peer feedback in more advanced college writing courses to confine perceptions of peer review as a school-based and even remedial genre. By contrast, looking *forward* to community and to workplace writing applications for peer review can amplify peer review's role in cultivating inter- and intrapersonal skills associated with career readiness. As a classroom TFT strategy, forward-reaching reflection involves students explicitly discussing future uses for certain writing skills and

genres. Backward-reaching reflection involves students evaluating their own prior experiences with and beliefs about writing or learning and considering how they can be applied to a current writing task. Taking this forward- and backward-facing examination of peer review as a framework, I aim to show that peer review as a whole can be productively re-examined through TFT. Furthermore, I encourage writing instructors across colleges and universities to utilize a TFT approach to implementing peer review using backward- and forward-reaching reflection and transparent learning goals. TFT helps reposition peer review as a significant professional genre through which learners can reflect and transfer writing and rhetorical skills as well as "soft" or "intangible" inter/intrapersonal skills that can prepare confident and well-rounded writers and thinkers after college.

LEGACIES OF PEER REVIEW'S HISTORY FOR TEACHING 21ST-CENTURY TRANSFER

Peer review as a teaching strategy and writing activity has more than a century of precedent, but the process movement of the 1970s and 80s remains the most prominent articulation of peer review praxis in writing studies. Even with recent attention to writing portfolios re-emphasizing peer review, process pedagogy and its expressivist and social constructionist theoretical underpinnings continue to be the dominant pedagogical approach to implementing peer feedback. Process approaches to peer review over the past forty years have productively foregrounded students' writing and insights and have underscored the value of addressing "authentic" audiences and obtaining feedback in writing classrooms. Much less emphasized in process-informed peer review practice is what learners should do with these peer audience encounters and with crafting and utilizing feedback beyond the classroom or assignment. Teaching peer review from a standpoint of transfer, as the next sections will explore, guides students to anticipate professional applications more intentionally for many skills gained in peer review. Before considering how TFT can utilize transparency and backward- and forward-reaching reflection to facilitate learning transfer, this section proposes that some of the lack of fresh scholarly and pedagogical attention to peer review—and indeed decline in the uses of peer feedback in college writing classrooms overall—is due to two significant historical legacies of integrating peer feedback into writing instruction: using peer review, first, as a labor solution for crowded classrooms and, second, for the purposes of remediation.

Today, many current practitioners of peer review were influenced by process pedagogy, which urged students to write to "real" peer audiences and to learn from one another as they worked together to improve drafts. Expressivist and social constructionist orientations emphasize certain aspects of peer feedback, such

as developing reading and revision strategies, hearing from audience members, and building knowledge and writing/rhetorical tools collaboratively. Rebecca Moore Howard summarizes peer response as a collaborative pedagogy, highlighting the pedagogical interests envisioned by peer review practitioners hailing from these theoretical vantage points: "[. . . T]o encourage students to articulate their readerly responses is to offer writers an understanding of the effects of their work. Equipped with this understanding, the writer can then better anticipate and provide for readers' needs and expectations" (61). As writing studies scholars pressed to establish their insights as a scholarly, praxis-based field of study, peer review presented a recognizable departure from models of correctness policing, lecturing, and instructor-directed writing practiced by many literature-dominated English departments (Tobin).

The main assumptions that process approaches to peer review conveyed were that students would derive writing insights from one another and that this learning opportunity would highlight the process (not product) of writing and share some of the power in evaluating student work. These interventions successfully targeted tired and even unjust classroom dynamics that had frequently foreclosed student voices and insights into writing. Yet, for all of its disruption and championing of students, process approaches to peer review fail to theorize the usefulness of engaging in this practice beyond the writing classroom.

Citing Muriel Harris' differentiation between peer review and peer tutoring, Rebecca Moore Howard summarizes, "Peer response focuses on general writing skills; tutoring, on the skills of one individual" (60). The primary set of skills process-trained peer reviewers obtain are "understanding the effects of their work" on actual peer audience members and crafting readerly "responses rather than [. . .] judgements" (Howard 61; 60). As a form of collaborative learning, Kenneth Bruffee argues that peer review "harnessed the powerful educative force of peer influence" in which "Students' work tended to improve when they got help from peers; peers offering help, furthermore, learned from the students they helped and from the activity of helping itself" (418). Bruffee describes that peer feedback might involve commenting on a paper's structure and areas for improvement as well as negotiating "consensus," both of which are valuable writing and thinking skills, but process pedagogy fails to provide students a means through which to utilize these skills beyond the immediate classroom context. As Linda Flower suggests:

> Many of the arguments for using peer response presume that the group will affect the cognition of the individual student: groups intervene within and can affect the writing process itself; they prompt students to work collectively to discover ideas;

> they create a live audience to which students can respond, which, it is argued, leads the individual to an internalized sense of how readers respond; and finally, they shift the emphasis in a classroom from product to process and from teacherly evaluation to writers' goals and readers' responses. (741)

As Flower's description underscores, process pedagogy utilized peer review to address perceived inadequacies of the classroom and prepared students to work together to hone drafts, all of which were aimed at cumulatively improving student writing. How and where should students transfer these writing skills? This question was of less interest to writing studies theorists during the process movement; it has become a central concern of writing instructors and learners today.

Since the process movement's challenges to "traditionalist" composition pedagogies, peer review and its role in decentering conversations about student writing have had a less clear pedagogical mandate. Teaching for transfer provides a new impetus and framework for engaging in peer review that addresses present-day demands for learning transfer as well as learner interests in workplace readiness. This lens for revisiting peer review as preparation for dynamic twenty-first-century workplace writing environments presented here has its own early predecessor. Lynée Lewis Gaillet excavated the writings of George Jardine, who taught philosophy at the University of Glasgow between 1773 and 1826. Jardine's argument for peer assessment assignments stands out in its assertion that peer critique engages rhetorical approaches which anticipate participation in the public sphere by (male) students from different class backgrounds (Gaillet 104). In Jardine's model, student examinations and feedback of one another's writing "prepares students for normal discourse in business, government, and the professions, which is both written within and addressed to status equals" (Gaillet 105). Like the late-eighteenth-century logic classroom, today's writing students debate and hone one another's rhetorical choices, whether text-based or multimodal, in manners similar to what they can deploy in community and workplace settings.

Jardine's early peer review praxis that considered ties to students' civic and professional lives was not the dominant framework for peer review over the next couple of centuries. Several prominent scholars in writing studies have made linkages between past peer review practice to more recent student-centered writing pedagogies. Newer scholarship is calling attention to the messier motivations and pedagogical goals that inspired early versions of peer writing feedback. Late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century writing instructors faced growing logistical and instructional challenges as new demographics of students entered college classrooms (Kitzhaber; Connors). Some of the responses to using peer review with more diverse and increased numbers of students have relegated

this writing practice to being associated with "busy work" and more general, lower-level writing classes. Both of these connections to peer review developed historically and pose obstacles today for students and instructors envisioning the long-term transferability of skills developed during peer review.

One difficulty forward-reaching TFT faces with peer review is a misconception that peer review replaces instructor feedback in order to lighten the grading load on faculty. This notion, it turns out, has deep historical roots in academic labor challenges. Many writing studies-trained practitioners are familiar with Anne Ruggles Gere's account of non-curricular writing groups developing a model of fruitful critical exchange amongst peers that took shape as writing workshops in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Kory Lawson Ching challenges Gere's genealogy by reviewing the primary sources upon which *Writing Groups* was based to show that peer review practice was at least as interested in reducing the teacher's workload amidst a challenging recitation and correction pedagogy as it was in elevating students' authority in the writing classroom. Ching reminds modern observers of centuries-old pedagogical tracts that our perceptions are "shaped by [their] own historical moment," just as Gere's history of writing groups during the "zenith" of peer review interest (303-304). The process-dominated 1980s lens Gere brought to nineteenth-century extra-curricular collaborative writing highlighted the absence of teachers during a contemporary interest in reevaluating power dynamics in writing classrooms (Ching 306). Conversely, Ching asserts that a "refiguring of history suggests [. . .] that 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" (308). The demand for college writing instructors to accommodate more students under a strict pedagogy of correctness led to the adoption of peer review in many 19th-century U.S. classrooms. In this setting, students were asked to emulate the teacher's grading and correction approaches (311)—skills that had little relevance beyond the immediate writing course. Peer review has since undergone several other pedagogical transformations, but the idea of students sharing the grading or feedback load of instructors persists and may impact students' motivations for engaging in peer review and their ability to recognize its connections to collaborative writing in workplace contexts. Instructors who assign peer feedback must continue to be transparent about the purpose of this activity. We must be clear that we are not asking students to take on the role of a teacher. Replacing the instructor's feedback on drafts is a lingering misconception of past peer review pedagogical settings that prevents students who do not plan to be writing instructors from envisioning future applications of the skills they develop through peer exchange.

Another obstacle to implementing forward-reaching peer review practice is a more recent prominence of peer review in predominantly lower-level writing

courses. Formal peer review of student writing is no longer as prominent in college classrooms, especially in upper-level courses. This decline presents the second major historical challenge to engaging with peer review through the lens of transfer today. In 2010 Joanne Addison and Sharon James McGee analyzed several large-scale surveys of writing instruction in college and high school. Two major trends they observed were that "college faculty are far less likely than high school faculty to (1) provide opportunities for informal, exploratory writing or (2) have students read/respond to other students' work" (Addison and McGee 157). The authors' own study of several different types of high schools and colleges/universities recorded that "have students read/respond to other students' work" was among the least frequently used "deep learning" practices by high school and college faculty, but slightly lower in college (157-8). Two studies they report on also indicate that students participated in peer review less frequently in their fourth year of college compared to their first year. These include Stanford University's institutional survey, which shows a 75% decline (156), and the 2002-2003 National Survey of Student Engagement of high school and college instructors, which shows 40% fewer assigned peer feedback on drafts (154). In all, these studies capture an emphasis on peer review in high school and first-year courses. One implication may be that students (and perhaps faculty) associate peer feedback with early writing classes in high school and college careers rather than with capstone, community, or workplace writing. Transfer of peer review skills will be less obvious to learners because of this trend.

Peer feedback on writing has lost some steam as a teaching practice, perhaps due to the lack of pedagogical underpinning connecting peer review to the central work and learning of the writing classroom since the process movement. In light of questions about transfer, connections to workplace writing, and emphasis on inter/intrapersonal skills, peer review offers renewed pedagogical exigencies for writing students today. Explicit effort is needed, however, to overcome lingering beliefs held by students and instructors that peer review is simply a way to give the instructor a break from "grading" or giving feedback and is not as worth the time and effort for more specialized, upper-level writing classes. TFT shifts the orientation of peer review from the writing classroom to explicitly anticipate professional contexts and transfer itself.

REFRAMING PEER REVIEW AS TRANSFERABLE SKILLS AND WORKPLACE WRITING GENRE

To reconsider peer review as a rich and relevant teaching and learning activity in and beyond twenty-first-century writing classrooms, we can start by examining its forward-reaching applications in workplaces. Peer review involves learners

exchanging drafts and crafting responses, feedback, and suggestions in an oral, written, or multimodal format. With the support of transparent teaching and reflection, learners can greatly expand upon this interaction by building awareness of how their own approach to the writing task compares to their peers' drafts, how their concerns and reactions to the feedback they receive can inform rhetorical decisions about crafting feedback to others; how to most effectively communicate responses to a peer's work with attention to others' feelings, and how well their peers' feedback on their own drafts navigated these rhetorical and interpersonal dynamics and could serve as models for future peer suggestions. Encouraging students to recognize the complexities of writing for real audiences in peer review promotes the development of inter- and intrapersonal skills that they can leverage in post-graduation workplace and community writing settings.

This section continues to adopt the meta-framework of examining backward- and forward-reaching connections of peer review by identifying peer review skill applications beyond the classroom. To facilitate forward-reaching reflection on peer review for learning transfer in our own classes, instructors must also be ready to describe specific forward-reaching interpersonal skills, be transparent about how these are useful and desirable traits in professional settings, and introduce peer feedback as a workplace writing genre.

Writing instructors have several resources they can utilize to draw forward-reaching connections between peer review and marketable intra/interpersonal workplace skills. With pressure to both anticipate types of skills that will serve graduates in their careers and lives and to measure learners' accomplishments, educational researchers and practitioners have begun to emphasize intra and interpersonal often referred to as "soft" or "invisible" skills in addition to technical and disciplinary learning (Dorman and Brown). Several organizations have sought to define the types of soft skills most needed for twenty-first-century workplaces in the past decade. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) identifies eight "competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace" ("Career Readiness Defined"). These competencies include (1) critical thinking/problem solving, (2) oral/written communication, (3) teamwork/collaboration, (4) digital technology, (5) leadership, (6) professionalism/work ethic, (7) career management, and (8) global/intercultural fluency. Several of these competency descriptions highlight intra- and interpersonal skills, such as "The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes" for Professionalism/Work Ethic. The American Association of Colleges & Universities surveyed employers in 2013. Reflecting on the AAC&U study they led, Finley and McNair explain:

> [Ninety-five] percent of employers agree (and 57 percent strongly agree) that "their company puts a priority on hiring people with the intellectual and interpersonal skills that will help them contribute to innovation in the workplace." Employers "place the greatest degree of importance on the following areas":
>
> Ethics: "Demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity" (96 percent important, including 76 percent very important)
>
> Intercultural Skills: "Comfortable working with colleagues, customers, and/or clients from diverse cultural backgrounds" (96 percent important, including 63 percent very important)
>
> Professional Development: "Demonstrate the capacity for professional development and continued new learning" (94 percent important, including 61 percent very important). (26)

As we look forward to the tools and skills that college graduates will need to utilize in their careers, working conscientiously with others rises prominently within such categories as "ethics," "professionalism," and "leadership" as well as more obvious "teamwork/collaboration" and "intercultural fluency/skills."

Several components of participating in peer review can target these workplace interpersonal skills; however, instructors must facilitate these connections. Some specific writing and inter/intrapersonal skills that peer review can facilitate include: comparing and evaluating the effectiveness of works-in-progress and of feedback; applying comparative insights towards revising own draft; organizing actionable feedback for an authentic (peer) audience; reflecting back on and applying own experiences as receivers of peer feedback to rhetorical strategies and content of feedback; empathy; developing and integrating emotional awareness into effective oral or written feedback; and evaluating and anticipating future applications of a multifaceted approach to peer exchange of writing in subsequent workplace or community writing settings. These valuable intra and interpersonal skills also prepare learners for workplace writing and thinking. Peers can gain sophisticated rhetorical insights simply by comparing their own work to their group members. Keith Topping suggests that this activity amounts to "norm referencing," which "enabl[es] a student to locate himself or herself in relation to the performance of peers and to prescribed learning targets and deadlines" (255). This comparative reflection helps students identify areas to improve on their current writing projects but should also be cultivated as a transportable benchmarking strategy for understanding how one's own products compare to colleagues' and whether any of their approaches might be adopted or improved upon.

There are multiple "soft" skills we can choose from to address through peer review. I encourage instructors to consider NACE, AAC&U, their own institution's employer and alumni research, and other data and recommendations on desirable inter/intrapersonal skills for graduates. We can also look to our current and former students for guidance about which skills matter. In my own classes, I currently emphasize applying comparative draft insights, organizing feedback for peers, and anticipating specific future applications of peer exchange. I aim to achieve these by explicitly explicitly stating these goals in my peer letter prompt and when I introduce peer review assignments as well as through reflection assignments at the end of major projects that have included peer review. The reasons I chose these specific intra- and interpersonal skills to focus on are that they build upon approaches I already see my students undertake (comparing their drafts to their peers; see the epigraph at the beginning of this article for an example of this), and they also make explicit often implicit knowledge about how to communicate feedback or use classroom-based peer review in professional contexts. I'll expand on my own practices in the next sections about transparent teaching and reflection, including why we should consider transparency in terms of access and inclusion. Here I wish to underscore that instructors must strategically engage in forward-reaching reflection about how peer review applies to workplace skills and make sure that we can identify and explain how these skills are valuable and applicable to future professional writing contexts.

In addition to fostering inter- and intrapersonal skills, peer feedback itself is a pervasive workplace genre. Topping and Van den Berg et al. all call attention to the realistic ways peer feedback anticipates workplace genres such as feedback and evaluations. Ineke Van den Berg et al. assert that "peer assessment of students' writing presents them with an authentic task" (342). The authors connect this experience to students' post-graduation lives, claiming that peer assessment "closely resembles students' future professional practice at the level of a higher education graduate, in which their texts will be assessed and commented upon by colleagues or, for example, by editors of a journal" (342). Peer review prepares writers to exchange documents with colleagues in professional settings. Topping calls further attention to some of the auxiliary skills that students build through peer review which also apply to workplace writing. He summarizes that "[l] earning how to give and accept criticism, justify one's position, and reject suggestions are all forms of social and assertion skills" and then observes, "practice in peer evaluation could facilitate subsequent employee evaluation skills" (Topping 256). Both of these studies confirm that the central writing scenario of peer review, giving and receiving suggestions to another writer or colleague, exists in workplaces and certainly beyond writing classrooms. As writing instructors, we have a huge opportunity to encourage students to attend to the rhetorical

and meta-awareness skills they deploy during peer review and anticipate how to adapt and transfer this knowledge to post-graduation writing settings.

Because of the historical legacies of peer review as "busy work"—making responding to drafts easier for instructors—and as a remedial writing activity, positioning peer review as both cultivating inter/intrapersonal skills and practicing a workplace genre requires reframing peer review for our students. Ensuring that we are clear about the transferable skills we are targeting with peer review is the first step towards TFT. Transparent teaching practice begins to implement a TFT approach to peer review, and reflection helps students envision applying this learning to their future lives and careers.

IMPLEMENTING TEACHING FOR TRANSFER THROUGH TRANSPARENCY

Despite what may appear to be obvious correlations between giving a classmate feedback on a draft assignment and offering suggestions to a colleague in a workplace setting, we should not assume that students anticipate this transferred application. For one, student participants in transfer studies frequently overlook ways that writing outside of the classroom relates to writing they complete within the classroom setting (Shepherd; Brent; Beaufort). Furthermore, with peer review specifically, students may view this exchange as preliminary or secondary to other assigned writing in their classes. They may even view peer feedback as a school genre with few analogies in other rhetorical settings. Many of these beliefs about peer review are rooted, as discussed above, in past implementations of peer feedback in college writing courses. As with any activity that we want students to transfer beyond the particular activity in which it is assigned, we must encourage students to recognize the larger uses of peer review. Our task as instructors is to make learners aware of forward-reaching applications for the writing and intra/interpersonal skills they develop in peer review once we have identified the transferable skills on which we want to focus.

One of the most straightforward actions we can implement is being specific and direct about the skills we want students to transfer from peer review and in what contexts they will apply. According to Ryan Shepherd, "Transparency is key to the process of facilitating transfer. Students should be aware of the connections we want them to make and why we want them to make the connections" (112). Threshold concepts have made the goals of writing pedagogies explicit and have encouraged instructors to design learning experiences, such as portfolio assignments, to directly support engagement with threshold concepts (Downs and Wardle; Adler-Kassner et al.). Recent scholarship in teaching and learning has similarly emphasized transparency as an approach to assignment

design and a teaching method that facilitates learning for low-income and historically excluded college students (Winkelmes et al.). Transparent teaching includes "teaching students about more than just the course subject matter. It means telling students about your rationale for how and why you've chosen to shape their learning experiences" (Winkelmes "Transparency in Teaching and Learning").

In introducing peer review assignments in my first-year writing classes, I take two main approaches to transparency. First, I share how my own experiences with grant writing for a nonprofit inform my emphasis on peer review as a useful workplace writing genre to practice. Second, I spell out my intended purpose, skills, and knowledge for peer letter feedback on my assignment prompt using Winkelmes' Transparent Assignment Template (see Appendix). I have implemented the first strategy for the past decade since teaching my very first college-level writing course. I found that I could get students' attention and even motivate them to draft thoughtful peer feedback by explaining that peer review had been one of the only forms of writing I produced in college which I used again in my job after I graduated. I then discuss how stressful writing grants became when I began my position as an AmeriCorps VISTA at a literacy nonprofit just before the recession hit in 2008. As a result, our small organization cranked out one grant and solicitation after another, constantly commenting on each other's words. I sometimes share that this mode of peer writing learning and adaptation was so influential that I had a hard time switching back to formal academic writing when I began graduate school. Early in my master's program, one professor kindly pointed out that I was using bolding, underlines, and italics not realizing that this font weighting was not as effective as it was in the skimmable grant requests I was so used to drafting.

This way of opening up about how influential the practices of peer feedback and benchmarking with my colleagues' writing were directly out of my undergraduate degree helps me be up-front about my motivation for spending time and devoting assignments to peer letters and face-to-face feedback in small groups. Even before I more actively encourage students to consider how their future workplaces might share and value colleague feedback, this early start to being transparent about my aims of teaching workplace-applicable writing through peer review helps foster trust in the assignment and motivation to offer more careful feedback through peer review. I do not have a comparison to "before" I shared this personal anecdote and how it affected students' peer letters or evaluation of peer review in my classes. I can offer two observations: (1) that it has energized my own experience of introducing peer review in my classes and (2) that I have never received a set of course evaluations that did not mention peer review as a valuable learning experience in the course.

Since my early "luck" with implementing peer review in my writing courses, I have developed a more robust approach to transparency which includes clearly stating the learning objectives and, more recently, the purpose, skills, and knowledge of my peer letter assignments using the Transparent Assignment Template. The appendix shares my most recent version of a peer review prompt for an online first-year writing class. Research into "transparency" by Mary-Ann Winkelmes and her collaborators suggests that sharing the pedagogical aims and rationales with students for assigned work helps reduce confusion and guesswork that marginalized and underrepresented students in particular face in college projects ("Transparency"). In a 2014-2015 experimental study of sixty-one college courses and 1,174 students, researchers determined that "students who received more transparency reported gains in three areas that are important predictors of students' success: academic confidence, sense of belonging, and mastery of the skills that employers value most when hiring" (Winkelmes et al.). The skills valued by employers (based on Hart Associates findings) were "learning on your own," "applying knowledge and skills to different contexts," "writing effectively," "considering opinions or points of view different from your own," and "judging the strengths and weaknesses of ideas" (Winkelmes et al.). Being transparent about the skills, knowledge, and purpose of our assignment reinforces several of the skills that we want students to acquire through peer review, including transferring knowledge and skills to new contexts. Clearly explaining these larger purposes of peer review will help students reflect on how they deployed the targeted skills during the peer review process, which is also essential for facilitating the transfer of these skills to new contexts.

IMPLEMENTING HIGH-ROAD PEER REVIEW TRANSFER THROUGH BACKWARD- AND FORWARD-REACHING REFLECTION

In addition to transparent goals for peer review, reflection is a widely recognized transfer-oriented practice (Driscoll; Yancey et al.; Adler-Kassner et al.). Reflection on the tools and strategies used to navigate peer feedback and on specific skills and learning that students can transfer into future writing contexts is necessary because transfer in general does not automatically take place within or beyond curriculum settings. This need for reflection is compounded by historically-grounded perceived gaps between peer review as a "remedial" and "school" genre and as a workplace genre with opportunities for useful post-graduation "soft" skill development. We must also keep in mind that as we shift from a process-informed approach to peer review to one rooted in TFT, reflection must also be repositioned for transfer. Writing instructors who wish to extend peer

review's impact to students' long-term writing, meta-cognitive, and interpersonal skills must actively build connections between peer feedback skills and other courses, workplaces, and community settings. Reflection highlights and amplifies the skills students utilize to observe, craft, and evaluate their own feedback and aids in transferring learning.

Process-era researchers considered reflection to be a central element in the recursiveness of the writing process. Since process pedagogies sought to push back against, as Sondra Perl explains, "the traditional notion that writing is a linear process with a strict plan-write-revise sequence," reflection assignments and studies created awareness of writers' uses of recursive strategies (364; Sommers). TFT takes a different orientation towards reflection. Kara Taczak states succinctly: "Systematic and intentional reflection prompts writers to transfer" (qtd. in Adler-Kassner et al. 29). She elaborates that systematic reflection "asks writers to look backward as a way to *recall* prior knowledge [. . .] to look forward as a way to frame and *reframe* writing situations, and to look outward as a way to *relocate* knowledge in effective and meaningful ways in different contexts" (29; emphasis in original). This echoes Perkins and Salomon's backward- and forward-reaching transfer, which I draw upon as a framework for this chapter's examination of peer review. Transfer researchers since the 1980s have distinguished between learning transfer required in "near" or similar versus "far" or seemingly unrelated contexts of practice. This distinction leads to different types of TFT interventions. Perkins and Salomon's influential distinctions between "high road" and "low road" transfer formulate these two approaches based on how similar or different students perceive two writing contexts to be. With low-road transfer, students recognize some commonalities between a new and a previous writing situation and utilize prior knowledge without much prompting or thinking. By contrast, high-road transfer presents students with the task of applying prior knowledge to a situation that does not appear to be similar to past writing experiences. Here, additional facilitation is necessary to help students develop connections. Perkins and Salomon suggest that both "forward-reaching" and "backward-reaching" transfer guide students to see connections to future or prior writing practice and identify strategies that apply in either direction from the present context. TFT reflection differs from a process approach to reflection in its focus on utilizing prior learning to not only foster self-awareness to inform writing decisions for the task at hand but also to stimulate thinking and strategizing for future skill applications.

Perkins and Salomon first proposed forward- and backward-reaching transfer as a response to the complications posed by high-road transfer situations or transfer between activities that students do not perceive as very related to one another. The authors view forward-reaching transfer as actively anticipating

connections between a current learning activity and a future setting where it could be applied. They offer the scenario of "an enthusiastic economics major learning calculus" who considers how this course could apply to economics-oriented problem solving (Perkins and Salomon 26). In backward-reaching transfer, this same economics major might be faced with a challenging calculation and reflect back on knowledge from the calculus class to apply in the current situation. Importantly, both forward-reaching and backward-reaching transfer require conscious reflection or abstraction in identifying useful similarities between the current task and prior learning or future applications. By contrast, low-road transfer takes place subconsciously without awareness and reflection, such as, Perkins and Salomon suggest, when a student opens a chemistry textbook and automatically reads based on "reading habits acquired elsewhere" (25). Shepherd observes that forward-reaching transfer has held more scholarly focus, but both deserve our attention in writing studies:

> As a field, we have tended to be more concerned with what students have learned in the classroom and helping them project forward to new writing contexts than we have with learning what students already know and helping them connect that knowledge to the current classroom context. I would argue that both of these types of transfer are important, and students cannot successfully engage in one type of high-road transfer without the other. (110)

As we consider how peer review can reinforce connections between the classroom and future writing and exchange experiences, both backward- and forward-reaching transfer offer opportunities for peer review.

In order for learners to enter into peer review with both awareness of the rhetorical and interpersonal setting and meta-awareness of their own choices and skill development, instructors must ensure that they reflect back on prior experiences of peer review and forward to new applications. Many students will understand peer review as being unidirectional: They must provide feedback on a peer's draft so the writer can consider an outside perspective and make revisions. Peer reviewers can be more attuned to the complexities of this exchange by reflecting on their past encounters with peer review assignments. If we ask students to reflect out loud or individually on what types of feedback they typically receive and what they prefer or don't prefer to get from peer feedback, students will often begin by identifying the impacts (or lack thereof) peer review had on their revisions or grade. They often point out that their reviewers responded with more feeling than substance, such as not "liking" a draft without explaining why or being "too nice." Both of these backward-reaching reflections highlight

typical, rather flat understandings of peer review as either simply for improving a grade on an assignment or too unpredictable and unhelpful because of the interpersonal dynamics between peers.

To facilitate backward-reaching reflection, students should engage in some form of written, oral, or activity-based recall and reconsideration of prior peer review experiences. In addition to sharing a transparent assignment prompt (Appendix), instructors can integrate a variety of low-stakes assignments into introducing a peer review assignment. These could include reflective writing prompts or mini-skits where students pretend they are providing feedback to a peer in a prior class (such as high school or first-year writing). For example, students could model effective or ineffective feedback, share (or perform) aloud, and then discuss how these feedback experiences impacted them as writers or learners. What was the purpose they perceived of engaging in peer feedback exchange? How did they react to and utilize the suggestions they received in response? Instructors could also provide examples of peer-written feedback and have students discuss in online forums or face-to-face small groups what types of comments are more and less helpful in the sample feedback. It is also worthwhile to address the issue of divergent or conflicting feedback: What do writers gain from having all reviewers state the same major points? What's missing? What do we gain from receiving multiple differing feedback points? What's challenging about this? Here again, a follow-up, full group discussion or instructor comments ought to highlight how certain types of feedback—generally more specific and carefully justified—are more beneficial to writers.

I aim to emphasize two key takeaway points from backward-reaching reflection with my own courses. First I want students to recognize that they have just put themselves in the place of the writer who is receiving feedback in order to evaluate which types of comments are most useful. Second, I underscore that they have just heard from their peers, to whom they will be giving feedback, that their questions and critiques are welcome. The first point is important to acknowledge as we consider the ways we can use our classroom-implemented approaches to peer review beyond the classroom through forward-reaching reflection. The second point helps push back on lingering perceptions that peer review is simply a "busy work" activity that is done for the instructor; I want them to realize that their peers are eager to hear their perspectives and experiences of the texts they are reviewing. The anecdotal evidence I see that this backward-reaching approach to peer review reflection works is that (1) students largely produce strong, detailed, and perceptive peer review comments—both written and in face-to-face conversation and (2) I have seen many semesters of anonymous course feedback that expresses how valuable peer feedback was for student writers during the semester.

Forward-reaching reflection helps make peer feedback's rhetorical challenge even more relevant because it encourages writers to navigate peer review with an understanding that they are developing precisely the types of useful, collaborative workplace skills that they will encounter with their colleagues after college. To facilitate forward-reaching reflection, I find that testimony about the uses of and skills learned from peer review gets students' attention. Even more valuable are opportunities for students to draft and rehearse ways of engaging in the transferable skills and practices using case study scenarios or imaginative prompts. We can help learners see that they have successfully articulated the rhetorical and interpersonal complexities that peer feedback poses to them as writers through this initial reflection. With this new awareness of their own reluctance or ambivalence towards peer review, they must consider not just how to "improve" someone else's draft but also how to help another writer be receptive to, understand, and be able to use the feedback that they provide. Instructors can help students consider how to map out and respond to social-emotional dynamics through their peer feedback by asking them to recall what kinds of feedback they had positive or negative reactions to about their past performances in writing or elsewhere. Hearing from other students in the class can reinforce shared experiences of frustration, appreciation, and confusion related to receiving feedback from a peer reader. We can invite students to draw upon these experiences as readers and receivers of peer feedback to cultivate "sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences" ("Career Readiness Defined") as well as to craft more rhetorically astute commentary on another's work. Backward-reaching transfer requires that learners consider and apply prior experiences to negotiate a new situation. With peer review, prior experiences can help writers empathize with their peers and adapt their responses to take their very real audience members' reception of feedback into account.

One example that I have begun to share with my students as part of forward-reaching reflection comes from an article about Jennifer Lee, who took over as Walt Disney Animation Studios' chief creative officer in 2018. According to a National Public Radio story, the workplace environment of Disney Studios involves "Teams of writers and directors not only work[ing] on their own movies, but also lend[ing] a fresh set of eyes and ears to the movies being made by other teams" (Blair). One of Lee's colleagues described her rise through the ranks as part of her contributions to this collaborative feedback environment:

> "She just accepted that the story team is in there trying to help build this story," he says. "You've got to keep that vision but listen to the ideas and figure out what is really behind

> those ideas. 'How is that going to help propel the character forward?' and 'Where do I push back and where do I actually listen and figure out how I'm going to alter where I see the story at this point in time?'" Lee's immediate embrace of Disney Animation's collaborative process "made the entire studio just fall in love with her," Spencer says. (qtd. in Blair)

I have students read this part of the article and discuss why a creative executive might have been so appreciated for her skills in peer feedback. Students in the past two semesters offered their hunches about how Lee may have demonstrated sensitivity, provided astute and helpful contributions, understood group dynamics, or even showed the ability to "smooth over" interpersonal tensions to accomplish the task at hand. A helpful follow-up to this forward-reaching transfer discussion is to pair this article excerpt with the NACE descriptions of career competencies. "Leadership," in particular highlights deeply interpersonal and "soft" skills, which students might be able to connect to Lee's example and to their own future uses of peer review experience. "Leadership," according to NACE, involves the ability to "Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work" ("Career Readiness Defined"). This explicit definition from NACE can help students better reflect on and frame the skills they used and even the challenges they faced during peer review with forward-reaching workplace applications in mind. For example, I often conclude a peer exchange assignment by asking students to use their peer review experience to draft responses to job interview questions such as "Tell me about a time when you had to give someone bad news" or "when you disagreed with a new direction for a project." By situating peer review as both informed by prior experiences and anticipating future experiences, students can often describe in much richer detail a multidimensional peer exchange involving drafts and feedback as well as person-to-person exchange, draft-to-draft comparisons, and feedback-to-feedback comparisons. Reflection activities that ask students how they approached their peer feedback, what considerations they used to decide what and how to communicate to a peer writer, and how they evaluated their own drafts and feedback compared to their peers prepare them to recognize and adapt these meta-awareness skills to workplace exchanges.

Rather than hope or assume that students are actively looking backward and forward at ways to inform and eventually utilize learning in our classrooms, we must build reflection and application into every peer review in order to teach for transfer. TFT once again offers a clear purpose for reflection, and facilitating peer

review using reflection as well as transparency will more readily enable learners to transfer the skills they develop during peer feedback. Reflection and transparency are particularly critical for facilitating the transfer of writing, meta-awareness, and inter/intrapersonal skills in peer review because of added distance instilled by past iterations of peer review practice. Learners may be frustrated in assuming that peer review is asking students to perform the "teacher's" task of correcting someone else's draft. If instructors do not recognize and help learners reflect on these prior beliefs, there will be limited potential for applying peer review skills in subsequent professional settings. Backward- and forward-reaching reflection specifically scaffolds learning transfer between settings that appear to be dissimilar to student writers.

CONCLUSION

Peer review and process pedagogy continue to inform writing instruction today, but current pressures and exigencies necessitate a re-examination of peer review's purposes as well as assumptions. The 2020 coronavirus pandemic has disrupted and recalibrated many teaching and learning practices and priorities. Peer review itself offers much-needed interaction in online and hybrid courses, which are now a necessity in higher education. While a process-informed approach to peer review sought to distribute power, center students' writing and voices, and underscore the recursiveness of writing, such goals today overlook some of the pressing concerns students bring into twenty-first-century post-COVID classrooms. Teaching for transfer presents a way to connect with students regarding their lives as professionals and writers outside of the classroom during a time when the world beyond the college classroom shapes and disrupts much of our work with students.

CCCC and CWPA issued a statement in June 2020 that seeks to guide writing instructors' course design decisions and changes in response to COVID-19. The "Joint Statement in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic" offers actionable items for instructors and their administrators to consider as programs weigh course design and delivery decisions that emphasize student-to-student interaction and reflection. It does not, however, present much in the way of student-oriented language about why a writing course would involve working with peers, "iterative" and "incremental" drafting assignments, and models of self-assessment of learning. As instructors continue to adapt pre-COVID-19 pedagogies and approaches to changing learning contexts, TFT would fill this gap and enable further transparency about the long-term learning objectives of preparing students for the types of writing and rhetorical savviness needed in professional and community writing workspaces. The statement encourages

peer feedback specifically as a way to implement one of the six stated "core principles" of "writers need readers." This recommendation, along with utilizing discussion boards, drafts, and self-assessment activities, includes a brief justification that is practical rather than praxiological; all of these teaching suggestions are recommended because they facilitate learning habits such as "flexibility," "motivation," and "engagement." Though clearly informed by online writing instruction research, process pedagogy, writing about writing, and even transfer to some extent, the statement itself omits pedagogical justifications to succinctly present "core principles of effective writing instruction drawn from disciplinary research." What I take from this document is our field's ongoing general value of both peer review and reflection as ways to achieve participation and offer a variety of writing and learning opportunities in college writing courses even during this stressful pandemic period. While peer feedback and reflection are useful components to include in courses where learners may be working and interacting remotely, I believe that students want additional reasons to participate in peer-to-peer exchanges, reflection, and self-assessment with such tremendous health, political, and social justice movements and upheavals taking place around them. Peer review can support connectedness even without a teaching -for-transfer approach, but if we add TFT we extend these valuable experiences to connect with today's students and offer transparency and variety in the ways in which we assess student learning.

Integrating TFT with peer review means stating clearly what the transferable skills are for exchanging peer feedback and facilitating that transfer through, I argue, forward- and backward-reaching reflection along with transparent goals. This shift from process- to transfer-informed peer review may benefit our courses now more than ever because articulating long-term uses for assignments offers a chance to demonstrate that we are invested in creating courses and outcomes that apply to students' lives outside of the classroom. Even before coronavirus-related stresses of physical distancing, the loss of jobs and job prospects, and patchwork public health policies, studies indicated that students coming into college classrooms today, so-called "Generation Z" or "iGen," have been asking for workplace and community applicability in their coursework (Pappano). They are eager to see connections between their classroom efforts and the career and community-engaged lives they aim to lead after graduation. Jean M. Twenge argues in her book on Gen Z that this generation was already significantly impacted by witnessing the Great Recession as adolescents and are more motivated to obtain job security and acquire skills for career advancement. It seems all the more important that we make clear how students' investment of time and effort into activities such as peer review and individual or group reflections promotes writing habits that apply to places beyond writing classrooms. We must also

keep in mind that we cannot assume that learners view peer review as similar to collaborative workplace writing settings. In fact, as I have cautioned in this chapter, learners and instructors may assume peer draft exchange is a remedial activity or simply a way to reduce how much feedback the instructor "needs" to give to each student based on historical trends and legacies of integrating peer review in over-crowded and lower-level courses. In short, we limit the impacts of our instruction and close off opportunities to dovetail our pedagogical interests with the goal-oriented spirit of many students in Gen Z if we do not discuss how the rhetorical and inter/intrapersonal skills they are learning can translate into other spheres of their professional and community lives. Amidst many distractions for learners today, it is all the more productive to articulate the purposes and future uses of assignments such as reflection and peer review through TFT.

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APPENDIX: SPRING 2020 "TRANSPARENT" PEER LETTERS ASSIGNMENT PROMPT

*I ran the first-year writing course from which this prompt is taken fully online in Spring 2020, but I added a peer letter template after COVID-19 hit my

Northeastern state hard in March prior to the peer review assignment. I share more on COVID-19's effects on peer review, transparency, and TFT in the conclusion.

Peer Letters (2 per assignment)
250-300 words per letter
Research Paper Peer Letters Due: **Sunday, April 5th**
Optional/Extra Credit Portfolio Peer Letters Due: Friday, May 1st

Purpose: Peer letters offer clear and targeted feedback on your classmates' drafts. They are actually a form of writing you will use in a workplace. Becoming comfortable stating how effectively or not another person's writing is—and explaining why—is a really important skill for working with your colleagues. In fact, the current chief creative officer of Walt Disney Animation Studio rose to her position because of how effectively she collaborated on peer feedback. Peer letters also develop your writing skills from the perspective of a reader.

Skills: The aim of this assignment is to help you practice the following skills that are essential to your success in this course and in your future careers:

- Identifying what stands out to you as an audience member/reader for another writer's work
- Describing what you took from someone's writing
- Explaining what effect a writer's choices had on you as a reader—both positive and negative effects
- Achieving an appropriate tone for real readers—your classmates—who needs to use your feedback to improve their drafts

Knowledge: This assignment will also help you to become familiar with the following important writing-related knowledge for use across disciplines:

1. Higher and lower-order concerns or issues in a draft
2. Letter structure

Task: You will find the first drafts of your peers' essays on the Blackboard Discussion Board. You will then write one letter to two writers in your peer group (ask me if you have questions about who you should write letters to).
Each letter should include:

- A summary of <u>what you understood the main argument to be as a reader</u> (this could be a couple of sentences)
- A discussion of the <u>paper's strengths</u> (*notice this is the paper's strengths, not the writer's strengths*), and point to <u>specific examples</u> from the paper and <u>explanations of why</u> they were effective
- An explanation of any <u>higher-order issues</u> you found as a reader, with <u>specific examples</u> and <u>suggestions for revising</u>

- A note about any lower-order issues the writer may want to consider
- Concluding remarks

>>You may use this letter template if you want:

Dear [name]:

I enjoyed reading your first draft of the Research Paper. What I understood your argument to be about was [*put their argument in your own words*].

I thought the major strengths of the draft were [*introduce higher-order strengths*]. For example, on page/in the __ paragraph, you discussed [*give specific examples of what was effective or strengths*]. I also found ____ to be effective because [*say why it was effective*]. Finally, _____ was a good choice because [*say why*].

I did have a little trouble understanding [*introduce what was not as effective or confusing from the draft—more higher-order issues*]. I thought this was [*explain what was confusing*]. Perhaps you could [*offer a suggestion for improving*]. Another part where I had difficulty was ____. Here I thought you could try . . . .

— OR — I didn't have difficulty understanding the organization or argument in your draft. One possible revision you could consider would be to [*offer a higher-order suggestion about paragraph order, introduction, thesis, topic sentences, sources, conclusion, etc.*]. This would make it so that [*explain what the alternative approach would achieve for the draft or its readers*].

There were some lower-order concerns in some sentences. For example, look at the ___ paragraph's ___ sentence. It's missing a word or two . . . [*Explain no more than 3 sentence-level or lower-order issues you noticed in the draft*].

Good luck with your second draft!

Sincerely,

[your name]

Criteria for Success:

- Did you write two 250-300-word letters to two different peers?
- Are your letters addressed to the writer and signed off by you?
- Do you cover:
  - What you thought the main argument was about?
  - Specific higher-order strengths?
  - Specific higher-order issues?
  - Why each example was effective or difficult to you as a reader?
  - How to revise each issue?
  - Any lower-order concerns you noticed?