

The Writer's Triad

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Goal: To introduce an alternative method of peer review which gets students into groups of three instead of pairs. To ensure that feedback from a peer is understood and recorded. To develop cooperation among students.

The Writer's Triad puts students into groups of three, in which the papers are passed to the person on the left (or right) so that each person in the three-some is looking at a peer's paper. Students spend the first several minutes as they normally would in a workshop, reading one another's drafts and, on a second reading, making notes in the margins and consulting the workshop sheet for items to focus on for this paper and workshop. The triad changes the normal dynamic of a workshop at the conclusion of the silent reading and marginal commenting period. At that point, students take turns playing the following roles. When the reader is providing feedback to the writer whose paper s/he just read, the third person become the observer/recorder, clarifying and keeping track of the feedback the writer is receiving. Writer and reader are thus freed to engage in dialogue about the paper, to look at it together, while the recorder takes notes and clarifies points being made. This is a workshop approach that turns noisy in a big hurry. It is, therefore, an animated form of workshopping.

Roles:

Writer: This is the person whose paper is currently being discussed. The writer takes an active role in posing questions and listening and looking carefully as the reader speaks.

Reader: This is the person who is providing feedback at the time. The reader provides answers to the workshop sheet questions, focusing on the most important feedback he or she believes the writer needs to hear.

Recorder: This is the person who was neither writer nor reader for this particular paper in the threesome. The role of this person is to carefully record the feedback the reader is giving, asking for clarification frequently and asking for the reader to provide specific locations where his or her evidence of the problems resides.

The main challenge with this form of peer review is helping students to **manage their time** so that each person plays all of the roles once during the workshop. We don't want anyone to go home without the kind of feedback they need to make progress on a draft.