Peer Critiques

Overview

📎 SAMPLE_P...bric.pdf View / Download	These are examples of guidelines and rubrics that you can use to help structure peer critiques. You can download this document from the link on the left. *In online classes*, this information (or something similar) might be posted as an Instructor Update to an assignment — or as an informational topic at the start of the semester.

Peer Critique Guidelines (sample)

For each project assignment, I would like you to comment on the work of the person who posts immediately *before* you. Please do this inside their post so that they can easily find the comments. If you are the first poster, come back on the last day to comment on the last person who posted.

If you wish to give helpful feedback, you should:

- **Start with something positive**. Be sure to comment on what is working. There is always something good that can be pointed out; even if a piece needs a lot of work. Try to mention:
  - a creative idea
  - an effective choice of colors
  - the beginnings of a strong design
  - a good understanding of the course material
- **Be honest**. Remember that you are trying to help each other improve.
- **Be tactful**. Phrase your feedback with the artist's feelings in mind. (See suggestions, below.)
- **Be specific**. Words like *good*, *weak* or *interesting* are very general. The artist should be given enough information to know which areas (foreground? upper right hand corner?) and aspects (composition? color choice? subject matter?) you are talking about. Explain with details and examples what is good, weak or interesting to you.
- **Critique the artwork, not the artist.** A single piece doesn't reflect an artist's overall ability. Make comments that focus on how the piece is working or can be improved.
- **Prioritize and limit your feedback.** If you find many areas that need improvement, sometimes it helps to break down your feedback into a list of "big things" and a list of "little things." Consider choosing 2 or 3 of the "big things" to focus on for your feedback.

Making Suggestions in a Tactful Way

- **Speak from your own perspective**. If you are stating facts about how the piece is working visually, it's okay to be direct (e.g. *"The use of overlapping shapes creates depth"* or *"The high contrast in this area makes it the focal point."*)
- **Acknowledge that there may be reactions** to the artwork by using phrases like *"My reaction to this is…"* or *"I found this to be…"* instead of *"This design IS..."*
- **Ask questions; avoid judgment.**
  - **Ask the artist about choices** s/he has made. Questions allow the artist to explain his/her intentions and are more supportive than evaluative comments. For example:
    - *"I'm wondering why you put her face in the center of the design. To me it feels static. Is that the effect you wanted?"* vs. *"Your design is boring because the face is centered."*
  - **Ask the artist to consider other possibilities**. Questions allow the artist to consider your suggestions without seeing them as demands or as "the only solution." For example:
    - *"I wonder how _____ would change it?"*
    - *"Do you think a _____ would make it more _____?"*
- Some **useful phrases** for making suggestions:
  - *You might want to consider...*
  - *You may want to try...*
  - *What do you think about…* (suggestion)?
  - *What if you…* (suggestion)

(contributed by Julia Brown)

Rubric #1

CRITERIA	YOUR CRITIQUE
Assignment Requirements Does this piece follow the basic rules/instructions of the original assignment? In what way(s)?	
Positive Attributes In what way/s has this piece correctly captured/addressed the nature/spirit of the assignment?	
Negative Attributes In what way(s) has this piece *not* captured the nature of the assignment? What suggestions can you offer? (i.e., How would you apply constructive criticism?).	
Conceptual Attributes Is this piece an appropriate *conceptual* vehicle for the assignment? Describe why or why not.	
Formal Attributes Does this piece display exemplary design *craft*? Cite specific instances of good/bad craft.	
Other Attributes Does this piece go beyond the boundaries of the assignment? If so, how? If not, what are some ways in which it might have done so? Speculate on the unexplored potential of this piece.	
(contributed by Julia Brown)	

Rubric #2

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTORS	Developing	Basic	Proficient	Outstanding	POINTS
Analysis & Application (40 points)	• Effectively analyzed both strengths *and* areas in need of improvement • Shows evidence of understanding course content • Incorporates art and design vocabulary from course					
Communication (40 points)	• Commented on what was working, as well as what could be improved • Adequately explained ideas; supported comments with specifics/details • Used appropriate tone (e.g., "I noticed…" "I wondered… " etc.)					
Contribution to Class (20 points)	• Gave feedback to three or more students (entered dialogue two or more times) • Showed evidence of having read other students' critiques					
					TOTAL	