**Writing Remotely: Some Suggestions for your Instructional Continuity Plan**

Plato’s Socrates (in the “Phaedrus”) criticizes the new technology of writing as too virtual and remote, allowing people to do and say things at a distance, beyond the classroom, even beyond the grave. As we shift to remote delivery of classes, we might encounter less disruption to our normal schedule by tapping into some of the virtual conversation inherent to writing (and reading). Here are three suggestions:

**Peer Review in Canvas**. I routinely use the Peer Review function in Canvas to organize and enhance feedback on student drafts. I typically have students provide this feedback outside of class in Canvas. To do this, you need to create an “Assignment” for the draft and select Peer Review as an option. You will be able to give feedback, as well as see the feedback from any student who has been assigned to that writer. (Unlike editing in Google, students giving feedback to a writer will not be able to see your feedback to that writer). Here is a guide for the steps to follow to set this up: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10094>

I recommend giving students some basic guidelines and expectations for the draft and the review. See below for my “Canvas Peer Response: Guidelines and Rubric.” Feel free to use or adapt.

**Discussions in Canvas**. In order to engage students with shorter and less formal writing, in response to reading or a question, of the kind I would normally ask in class, I will post a Discussion in Canvas. My plan is to set it for a particular time (likely during the normal class time). I also plan to have students read and respond to one or more posts from their classmates, to generate some virtual discussion of ideas beyond the class. I have done this before when away from class for one day; I have not yet tried this over an extended period of time.

**Writing Center Consultations**. Continue to emphasize and cultivate student use of the Writing Center as a significant resource. Their online scheduling platform is already enabled for peer conferencing. For questions and further details, contact Dr. John Boyd. One thing we might reinforce to students: the effectiveness of listing or identifying for the peer tutor (and for you, in the case of a conference you might conduct, and for themselves) a few items that they are working on, specific areas for which they would like feedback. I ask students for their to-do list. That will be particularly helpful in a mediated conversation.

Please share your strategies and suggestions with me, the CTL, and others. Like Plato, I’m always in the market for a good Idea.

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Canvas Peer Response: Guidelines and Rubric

Guidelines for Peer Response:

These are the questions your peer response should answer. In addition to providing your response in the comment box at the side, you can also identify specific moments on the text (using the insert comment function) that direct the writer to elements of your response (for example: this section here is a strength; this section is an example of where I think the draft needs to elaborate the argument, etc.) I will expect to see all four of these questions addressed in order to receive full points.

1. **What’s the project? What does the focus/argument seem to be at this point? Report back as best you can what you take the argument to be (a brief abstract of the draft).**
2. **What’s working? How can the writer build on the strengths of the draft? Identify one or two strengths, with specific reference to (or marking of) the draft.**
3. **What else might be said? How should the writer acknowledge other views/possibilities for the argument? Where might the argument need to be clarified or complicated? Point to a specific location, raise a question, suggest a counter-perspective.**
4. **What’s next? What are some implications that the essay might work towards in its conclusion? What does the writer need to do to get there?**

Rubric for Peer Review (5 points)

5: peer response is thorough and thoughtful, responding to all questions/categories as assigned, providing the writer guidance with what's working but also what else might need attention

3-4: responds to most questions/categories, providing sufficient guidance to the writer, with room to expand the response and explain further what's working and/or what else needs attention

1-2: limited peer response provided, only general comments that don’t address the questions

0: no peer response

Rubric for the Draft you submit (5 points)

4-5: draft is at least 2 pages, submitted on time, in paragraph form, with sufficient argument (terms) and text (quotations, examples) that the reader can respond to

3: draft is submitted on time, but limited, barely 2 pages or less, not much for reader to work with

1-2: not submitted on time or very limited

0: not submitted