Feedback and Revision

Writing instructors help students....
Give and receive constructive feedback; revise based on feedback, further research, and reflection.

Constructive feedback is more than copy editing; it is about applying the reading/writing/thinking skills to a specific piece of writing with the purpose of refining, deepening, disrupting, or enhancing the argument.
- It means contributing questions, suggestions, and possibly new information.
- It means presenting those ideas/questions/suggestions in a critical yet positive, helpful way--not just saying "good job" or "change this comma to a semicolon."
- Constructive feedback leaves to the author the final decision about **how** and **whether** to apply that feedback in revision.
- Constructive feedback helps the author **build upon** what they already have.

Revising is re-envisioning; it means spending more time reflecting and rereading your own work so you can see things from a fresh perspective and synthesize feedback from peers, instructors, and yourself in order to improve a piece of writing.

Writing is a process; there are multiple steps to creating good writing besides sitting down the night before a deadline and writing one draft. Reading and commenting on our peers' work is useful for supporting our classmates and improving our own writing as a result—seeing their application of the lessons and ideas from class helps us think of more/different ways to write ourselves. This process also supports students in continuing to develop authority over their writing, as they decide how and whether to apply outside feedback--particularly when they've gotten input from multiple people that may not always agree--and using that feedback along with their continued learning/reading/thinking and their own sense of their goals for this written work. Through repetition of this thinking, drafting, providing and receiving feedback, revising process, students can improve a particular essay but also, through reflection and application, improve their individual writing processes going forward.

In a dream world this might also include helping students identify sources for outside feedback for when they're in classes that don't have a built-in peer review and revision processes as part of written assignments.

Why is this objective important? For students, for the program?

This goal helps students transfer their skills to other courses by understanding that writing is both an independent and community activity; as such it helps students come to value the UO as an academic community of which they are part and of which they can make use. Practicing review of others' writing helps students become better editors of their own work, transferring their skills of writing process into future writing/classes.
If students are guided toward more independent revision through the process of peer review, including learning about and maybe using outside options for essay feedback (like the tutoring centers), this outcome would also help them learn about and make better use of available campus resources to continue to improve their later work.

Example Learning Activities:

Full essay peer review as part of the essay cycle: Using specific instructions from the instructor, students may engage with peer work in a variety of ways, either live or outside of class. Some teachers may choose to begin with a sample essay that everyone peer reviews independently, which students can then discuss in groups or with the full class; this can help "norm" the process, as everyone sees whether they apply the class material and reading material in similar ways, and the teacher can intervene if students seem unsure of what to do. Then students may offer each other feedback in various ways:
- Writing circles, where students read peer essays in preparation for a group conversation about how each person might improve for version X.2.
- Independent peer review using the official class rubric to focus feedback.
- Paired or group peer review where students write each other feedback letters, using instructor guidelines.

Paragraph peer review as part of the cycle or separate practice: Students draft and peer review one specific paragraph of an essay based on in-class lessons.
- For example, the instructor might pull examples of introductions from a set of first essays to use anonymously for a class activity on introductions; this would help all students improve their own introductions for the second essay.
- Instructors may also choose to use their own sample paragraphs to illustrate particular common issues in student writing, or they may assign students to find examples similar to what they are working on in class, making paragraph-finding part of the peer review activity as well.
- Similarly, students might look at a peer's paragraph(s) based on the week's lesson (e.g., "body paragraphs with evidence"), then give and receive revision tips before those practice paragraphs appear in the next assigned essay. Instructors may revise the expectations for success on the final essay as each type of paragraph (introduction, body paragraphs with evidence, counter arguments, assumption paragraphs, etc.) is covered in class through instruction and peer review.

Post-cycle reflection or version X.3: Students may further their revision process through post-essay reflection or even another round of revision.
- Students may be assigned to write a "revision statement" that outlines the changes they made and why, particularly highlighting where they chose among different suggestions and/or ignored a piece of feedback. This prompts them to articulate (to themselves, too) their prioritization and process and can help them see what they might do differently in the future, with this essay or another one.
- Students may do a new version of the paper at the end of the term, perhaps as extra credit or to raise their grade on one of the previous essays. This may include a revision statement, track-changes, or other commentary on their process to further emphasize the reflection portion of the process. Alternatively, students may be required to use a tutor from somewhere on campus and submit their notes from that meeting along with the new X.3 essay, which would reinforce the learning objective of gaining independence in the writing and revision process.

Additional Resources:
- CTW: https://writingtutor.uoregon.edu/
- TAEC: https://engage.uoregon.edu/
- AEI Tutoring: https://aei.uoregon.edu/current-students/tutoring