Peer Editing on a Large Scale!
Peer Editing is Fun!

Working with your classmates to help improve **their** writing can be lots of fun.

Working with your classmates to improve both your writing and their writing can actually be lots of fun!
What is Peer Editing?

• **A peer** is someone your own age.
  - A person who shares your ability, age, or background; your equal.

• **Editing** means making suggestions, comments, compliments, and changes to writing.
  - To review, correct, and suggest changes to another person’s work.
What is Peer Editing

• 1 - Compliments:
  Positive comments
• 2 - Suggestions:
  Areas for improvement.
• 3 - Corrections:
  Based on set of objective criteria.
Compliments

• The first rule of peer editing is to STAY POSITIVE!
  - Helps future lawyers prepare for giving and receiving feedback.
  - Provides a different perspective
  - Fosters teamwork
Complaints

• The first rule of peer editing is to STAY POSITIVE!
• Awkward/Uncomfortable
• Comments are Tempered (see rule 1).
• Students feel unqualified
• Students want professor feedback.
• It is AWKWARD.
How did I turn this:
Into This:
STEP 1

Gather the Papers

- Pull and randomly sort the papers.
- Number the papers.
  - Jane Doe - 5
- Save and print your copy.
- Delete the name, but leave the number.
- Print three or four copies.
- Sort into piles.
STEP 2

Conduct the Exercise

• Randomly sort the students into groups: no less than 3, no more than 4.
• Give these instructions.
  - No dividing papers
  - Must concur on comments
    • Or provide all perspectives
  - Must do all papers
  - Be honest, fair, and professional
STEP 2

Conduct the Exercise

Post or hand out the parameters.
The Statement of Facts

- Are the parties/involved persons identified?
  - Do descriptions sufficiently identify the relationship to the case?
  - Do descriptions properly invoke empathy with the writer's client and/or properly distance feelings of connection to the opposing party?

- Does the writer go overboard?

- Are unnecessary and/or distracting facts included?
The Statement of Facts

- Are things/concepts properly described?
  - Can the reader picture the environment?
  - Do descriptions fit naturally within the story or are they distracting?
  - Are they included as an afterthought?
  - Are you wishing you had known this information earlier?
The Statement of Facts

• Can you tell who the writer’s client is?
  - If you see inconsistencies in the facts, mark the paragraphs or sentence with Π symbol for the prosecution, and the Δ symbol for defendant.

• Do the facts improperly include commentary or argument?
STEP 3  
Provide Oversight

- Review the papers/feedback before returning them to the students.
- I use my special PURPLE pen.
- Spend the class providing individual feedback on your copies.
- Discuss the papers, comments, common errors, during the following class.
My Take Away

• I LOVED IT.
• Students were engaged with one another.
• Every student participated.
• I could anticipate questions just by listening.
• I could hear what they had taken away from prior classes.
• The student feedback was excellent!
Student Feedback: What did they like?

1. The exercise!
   - Multiple perspectives
   - Providing feedback = gained insight
2. The anonymity!
   - More forthcoming
   - Increased quality of feedback
   - More comfortable/less awkward
3. The group work!
   - Getting to discuss the suggestions before marking up the paper
   - Tempered harsh comments
Student Feedback: What didn’t they like?

• 1. The persuasive writing exercise: One student felt the comments were more content based on the objective and more stylistic on persuasive.
• 2. The timing! They need more time!
Student Feedback: Ways to Improve the Exercise

- More time.
- Same format, fewer papers.
- Review comments and common mistakes in following class.
- Increase anonymity by switching the papers between classes.
Things to Remember...

• **Stay positive** - Peer editing can actually be fun for everyone ... including the professor.

• **Be specific** - Give the class a checklist of specific criteria you want them to consider as the reader.

• **Provide oversight** - Students want to hear from you.