Facilitating Peer or *Reader Responses: the “Read-around and Post-it” Approach
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*I prefer using the language of “reader response” to emphasize the fact that students can be helpful readers of their colleagues writing and that all writers need readers.

Ask students to bring drafts in progress to class.

1. Bring a pad of 3x5 post-its and ask students to take 3-4 post-its to use for this activity. Then ask them to circulate their drafts 3x in one direction (so that they’re not responding to someone sitting next to them). Ask them to read the draft in front of them with a particular response question in mind. Here are three useful ones to help guide re-thinking/revision:

   • In one sentence: What big idea or claim does this draft seem to be making?
   • What part of this draft (give page, paragraph, and line) seems most engaging, interesting, well-written to you? And why?
   • What is one main lingering question do you have as a reader? And why would you appreciate it being answered?

While these three response prompts are usually very useful in guiding revision, the response question can be anything that fits the particular writing prompt, but it helps to just pose one at a time.

2. When done writing the post-it response, put it on the BACK of the draft. Circulate drafts with post-it on back and repeat process asking readers NOT to read previous post-it response.

3. Repeat the read-around process as many times as time permits. Then circulate back the drafts with attached post-its to their owners and ask writers to read response post-its and consider what to do with the post-it responses.

4. At this point, you can ask students to verbalize what they might do to revise in response to their post-its or to write themselves a revising note based on the responses they received. Instructor can also pick up the drafts and read the responses and use them as the basis for additional oral/written feedback to class as a whole.

Note: This read-around process can actually take up a short amount of class time especially if it’s done frequently and students get used to it. Student writers often report that not only are their colleagues’ responses helpful, but it gives them a chance to see what other people in the class are writing.