

# Session D1 - English papers

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## Peer feedback: Using disciplinary-specific teaching formats as "bridges" to enable student engagement

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### Program text

Adapting disciplinary-specific teaching formats and using these as "bridges" is suggested as a method allowing students with different experiences and skills to engage in collaborative learning processes such as peer feedback.

### Abstract

#### Introduction

Peer feedback has been proven to significantly strengthen students' academic writing skills as well as foster meta-cognitive awareness on learning processes (Gibbs et al. 2004, Nicol et. al 2006). In order to unleash this potential, a collaborative and trusting ethos is required (Topping, 1998). Creating such a learning environment can present a challenge in disciplines where academic writing is not a part of the established curriculum, and where the genre and activity therefore can be alienating to some students. To overcome this problem, we propose the method of adapting disciplinary-specific teaching formats and using these as "bridges" to enable students' active engagement and unlock student's co-creation skills.

#### Method

The proposed method has been applied at the Design School in Kolding at a course initiated as a part of the Master's thesis supervision. As a method to create a trustful setting, the design specific and familiar space of "the studio" (Salama and Wilkinson, 2007) was used as a metaphor to create a one day course named The Writer's Studio. Freewriting (Elbow, 1998) was introduced as a creation tool to 'visualize' students' concepts and ideas for a synopsis, and peer feedback was introduced for 'shaping and co-creating' first drafts of a synopsis. Both peer feedback and the concept of creative constraints (see freewriting format), are commonly used in design as methods to spur creativity.

#### Results

According to students own written evaluations (fifteen participated, six developed their own evaluation schemes for the course) the format succeeded in supporting their writing process on several levels. From a teacher perspective, the notion of Writer's Studio served as a way to create a "bridge" between the familiar and unfamiliar, enabling students' active engagement with the genre as well as each other.

## Discussion

The creation of a suitable setting for design students, invited them to be active participants in peer feedback on academic papers and decrease the risk of feeling alienated by the academic genre. We suggest that teachers have the responsibility to try to create a setting that allows for students with different experiences and skills to engage in collaborative learning processes. Adapting disciplinary-specific teaching formats and using these as "bridges" is a method to do so.

## Authors

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## Literature

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