

## **PLAYING A TEACHERLY ROLE: POWER AND PEER RESPONSE IN WRITING CLASSROOMS**

***Kaia Simon English, UW-Eau Claire***

Peer response in writing classrooms is a common pedagogical practice, and it is also often an unsatisfying, if not frustrating, experience for both students and teachers. This presentation draws from a larger ethnographic study of seven writing classrooms. Grounded thematic analysis of interview data from seventeen first-year writing students reveals that a majority are uncomfortable in the unequal power dynamics of being placed in the teacherly role of responding to writing. Students often respond by refraining from offering each other critical feedback. Instead, they hedge, they offer “do whatever you want,” or they provide blandly positive responses to instructor prompts. Students’ discomfort suggests the need for re-envisioned purposes of peer response that do not place students in a teacherly role. Equity-based approaches to peer response in first-year writing classes can decenter enactments of social power and linguistic oppression that might play out among students and might empower student writers.

