

Responding to Reviewers' Comments

Dr. Matthew Kelly

Associate Professor & Academic Writing Consultant

ORSSP Research Design & Data Analysis Lab

Overview

- Discuss role of comments in peer-review process
- Review strategies for responding to reviewer feedback

The Peer-Review Process

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- Goal of peer-review process: confirm validity and rigor of scholarship

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- Ensure that other scholars can cite your work with confidence
- Provide the foundation for others to build upon

The Peer-Review Process

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- Peer-review \neq critiquing an author's work
- Peer-review = protecting future scholars
- The “peer” in peer-review applies to both reviewers and readers

Responding to Comments

- Discuss how to balance reviewer concerns with your own focus and goals

Responding to Comments

- **Prioritize feedback**

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- **Higher-order versus lower-order concerns**

Responding to Comments

- Lower-order concerns: stylistic and structural

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- Lower-order concerns: stylistic and structural
- Clarity of prose, sequence of main ideas, consistent formatting, proper citations
- Sentence-level details are important for accessibility and visibility

Responding to Comments

- Higher-order concerns: methodological and conceptual

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- Issues surrounding methods used when gathering and analyzing evidence
- Issues regarding research practices and how you engage with other scholarship

Responding to Comments

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- Higher-order concerns speak to fundamentals of your research
- This is what you should prioritize first
- Sentence-level issues won't matter if reviewers disagree with your research practices

Responding to Comments

- How can we respond to higher-order concerns?

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- Place trust in your outside sources
- Use your sources to “speak for” concerns posed by reviewers

Responding to Comments

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- **Unclear about relevance → find sources the reinforce real-world impact**

Responding to Comments

- Using sources to respond to comments can help you feel less defensive

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- Locating new sources helps research evolve organically
- Avoid “knee jerk” reactions towards comments

Responding to Comments

- How do you respond to lower-order concerns?

Responding to Comments

- How do you respond to lower-order concerns?
- Often, the comments will tell you how
- Lower-order feedback is usually more prescriptive (reviewers will outline what you need to change)

Editorial Correspondence

- Conclude by discussing an important part of the revision process: correspondence with an editor

Editorial Correspondence

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- Good editor can identify most important changes
- You can ask questions to editors (but do not request correspondence with reviewers)

Editorial Correspondence

- Provide cover letter to editor when submitting revisions

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- Provide cover letter to editor when submitting revisions
- Identify most important revisions that were made in response to specific comments
- Demonstrate willingness to work with reviewers

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- During revision process, your primary goal is not to defend integrity of your work

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- During revision process, your primary goal is not to defend integrity of your work
- Instead, your primary goal is to confirm that you are actively incorporating feedback
- Cover letter shows openness to feedback

Conclusion

- Let's recap

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- Lower-order concerns: stylistic and structural, comments are often prescriptive
- Higher-order concerns: methodological, comments warrant inclusion of more sources
- Cover letter demonstrates investment in revision

Conclusion

- The ORSSP Lab has consultants to help with both quantitative and qualitative research questions
- Webinars that discuss writing strategies
- Resources to help authors draft writing at every stage