INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



# Margin Mates

Margin Mates is a contemporary approach to peer editing that uses digital tools to enhance collaboration and feedback quality. Students will also develop digital literacy competencies that extend beyond the classroom into professional and academic contexts.

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# MARGIN MATES

## Summary

This collaborative instructional strategy teaches students to comment digitally on a peer's work. As a peer editing strategy, it will help students interact with each other regarding individual or shared assignments. Students master the technical aspects of using comment features in platforms like Google Docs, Microsoft Word, or other collaborative writing tools. They learn to select text, insert comments, reply to feedback, and resolve suggestions. Students will identify strengths, ask clarifying questions, suggest improvements, and provide encouragement to works in progress.

## Procedure

1. We recommend modeling the following steps using your own text to show students how to use your chosen digital platform and how to give effective feedback.
2. Students choose a digital written work in progress and a common online platform (e.g. Google docs, Word, etc.).
3. Introduce “comment categories” or specific types of feedback you want students to provide:
    - **Glow** Comments: Highlight strengths and effective elements
    - **Grow** Comments: Suggest areas for improvement or expansion
    - **Clarify** Comments: Ask questions when meaning is unclear
    - **Connect** Comments: Link ideas to other parts of the text or external knowledge
4. Pair students as “margin mates.”
5. Partners read and comment on each other's work using the established categories. Set minimum comment requirements (e.g., 3 glow, 3 grow, 2 clarify).
6. Original authors read comments and respond to questions or feedback, creating a dialogue in the margins.
7. Students revise their drafts based on feedback received, using comment resolution features to track changes made.
8. Margin mates review revised drafts and provide follow-up comments on improvements made.
9. Establish regular margin mate sessions for future writing assignments, gradually reducing scaffolding as students internalize the process.

Double, K. S., McGrane, J. A., & Hopfenbeck, T. N. (2020). The impact of peer assessment on academic performance: A meta-analysis of control group studies. Educational Psychology Review, 32(1), 119-145.https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-019-09510-3