

SWEETLAND DISSERTATION WRITING GROUPS

HOW TO WRITE AN INTERDISCIPLINARY FEEDBACK LETTER

Read the workshop draft twice.

Because you're reviewing work from somebody who might not work in your academic field, your first read should work as a general introduction to some specific terminology you might not be familiar with. During this first reading, underline all concepts you believe need clarification, and send a personal email to the author asking if those concepts are easily understood by the author's audience.

During your second read, in which you mark up the text for argumentative concerns, you can mark up the text gathering the necessary information that will allow you to write a letter to the writer following the template below. Remember that the comments you provide will serve the writer in rewriting/revising his/her chapter. It will be the writer's task to decide how to use your comments. Do not fear being over-simplistic. To create consistency in the feedback the writer receives, we suggest you write a letter including these three paragraphs. If there is anything else you would like to add, please feel free to do so.

Paragraph 1: Detail what works in the essay. Articulate *how* or *why* something is particularly effective, given the purpose and scope of the chapter. Be as specific as possible, pointing out what works for a lay audience and what you think works for the specific academic community to which the writer belongs.

Paragraph 2: Paraphrase the chapter's main point as you believe the author intended it to be. Try to extensively answer these questions from a lay perspective: What is this chapter about? What is its role in the dissertation? If you find it difficult to answer these questions, reflect in writing on why you find it difficult. Can you come up with 2 or 3 key points that work particularly well or that need revision, and expand on those? Keeping in mind the chapter's goals, does the author express a clear narrative? What is it? Do you think the chapter adds to the scholarly work done in the writer's specific field?

Paragraph 3: Detail any other substantial issue you notice in the chapter, related to analysis and organization but also on language issues. Do you have any concern about sources used or quotes reported in the text? Are there any features of structure or language that distract you from the overall goal of the chapter?