Peer Review

Here are some suggestions and ideas for conducting peer review sessions with your students:

1. Be clear from the beginning that the peer review process is not designed so that students grade each other. Remind them that the purpose of feedback is to direct their learning.

2. Provide students with a set of standard questions to ask about each other's work. Advise them to respond like *readers*, not writers.

3. Have the whole class review an anonymous student's work from a previous term and model how you would comment, ask questions, and make suggestions. Show students how differently worded feedback can produce different results. For example,

   - "Delete this sentence" may be good advice, but the writer does not know why he should do it. "You might consider deleting this sentence" will give the writer a chance to think about whether it makes sense or needs to be rewritten.
   - "This argument does not persuade me" may be a statement of fact, but it does not help the writer know what he/she needs to do to change the reader's mind. "This argument seems based on opinions and not enough facts for me to agree to it" gives the writer a way to strengthen the work.

4. Be explicit about the difference between feedback and criticism and the unhelpfulness of comments such as "Great!" Remind students that all comments should help the writer learn.

5. A self-evaluation can help students develop objectivity, and asking students to prepare a review before class can encourage more thoughtful feedback.

6. Have students do a "speed dating" peer review. Ask students to bring one part or section of a paper to class and sit in a circle, passing their papers around. Give them 3 minutes to read and reflect on each, decide if it meets your criteria, and write a brief comment explaining their view.