What is "Calibrated Peer Review" CPR and Why Are We Doing It? [1]

Employers often identify communication skills as the most important characteristics of a prospective employee immediately following graduation from college. Your general writing courses typically do not give you enough practice writing in your discipline while your studio work emphasizes graphic rather than written communication. Learning to write well requires regular practice and feedback. Weekly writing assignments are rare because grading large numbers of essays is very time consuming.

In this class we will be using a web-based program, called Calibrated Peer Review (CPR). The assignments are intended to prepare you to produce a well written, high-quality term project report. You'll get regular practice and feedback, while at the same time gaining the critical evaluation skills that employers want.

Therefore, in our course we will be assessing your architectural structural capabilities in three ways:
(1) Learning facts, structural concepts/principles, and problem solving, as tested on assignments, quizzes and the final exam,
(2) Applying the principles of structural analysis and system behavior through a term project,
(3) Writing and critiquing your peer's writing on structural topics, as tested with Calibrated Peer Review (CPR).

Calibrated Peer Review (CPR) is web-based software designed to increase the amount of writing done while teaching other subjects, including architectural structures. The program accomplishes this by having you, as students, evaluate each other's writing. Since "peer review" is useful only if you take the job seriously, CPR "calibrates" you by having you first read essays of known quality. So the process is this:

(1) Time Period A: You will read and/or collect the necessary background information on a structures-related topic, then write an essay about the topic following guidelines, and submit this on-line through the CPR program. Then you will wait until Time Period B begins.
(2) Time Period B: You will then be "calibrated" so that we know you can, with some expertise, be able to recognize a poor essay, a reasonable essay and a good one. After calibration, you will be given 3 of your fellow students' essays to review. This is done anonymously. If you do well at the calibration, your reviews of other students' essays will be worth more. Assignment grades depend on the quality of your own essay, your reviews of other students, and the final critique of your own essay. So, you can write a mediocre essay, but still get points because you recognized that you could have done better.

Question 1: This is my first CPR in the class, how do I access my assignment?
- Go to the CPR Login Page (http://cpr2.tamu.edu/).
- Enter your CPR username and password. You will not have to take the website tour again if you have already taken it. If you forgot your CPR username, click on the **Recover login information** link. After selecting your student ID (your UIN number), you will be prompted to answer your question. If you do so correctly, you will be asked to give a new password.
- **If you are a new user, follow the Create new user profile link.**
- Enter your UIN number. DO NOT USE DASHES. If you don't remember it, login into howdy.tamu.edu. It is the number next to your name with 00 in the middle.
- Complete your profile by creating a password and a challenge question. The server will give you your CPR username. ***Write down your user name and password along with your challenge question and answer for your records.*** *Please choose a challenge question that you CAN remember the answer for in the future.*

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[1] Content adapted or repeated in entirety from Chemistry 101 – Dr. Wendy Keeney-Kennicutt

You will use this username and the password you created to access all your CPR assignments in ALL your courses at TAMU. If you are using CPR in more than one course, this username will allow you to access all of them. You can find this information on the class website, folder, and E-learning (e-learning.tamu.edu). Tutorials and handouts are available on the CPR web page.

Question 2: What do I do if I need help in writing my paragraph?
There are several things you can do. Have a friend read your paragraph or simply read it out loud yourself and see if it makes sense. Write it in a word processing program so you can check spelling and grammar. Also, there is a University Writing Center in Evans Library on the second floor, room 1.210 B. It is open Monday-Thursday 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. or on-line at http://uwc.tamu.edu/ (with great resources and tutorials.) Appointments are recommended, but the consultants will take walk-ins as tie allows. You can even submit your essay on-line for advice. For more information call (979) 458-1455 or send questions by e-mail to uwc@tamu.edu. For more information see "How To Do Well On Your CPR Assignment" (CPRStudent_Results.pdf).

Question 3: How do I format my TEXT entry?
You will want to use the minimum of HTML tags in your paragraph because your work is easier to proof. One suggestion: Write you text using a word processor, paste it into the CPR Text Entry box, then add the HTML tags (given in the CPR Student Handout – CPRStudent_Handout.pdf or the Formatting Help button). If you make a mistake in your HTML, your TEXT could be "invisible" to your reviewers and you will receive a low score. Use the PREVIEW button often. If the PREVIEW button isn't working for you, try a different computer – it may be browser sensitive.

Always save your TEXT entry on your own disk. Be sure to check that you have received confirmation from the server that your text has been submitted. Check the timing for when you will start the reviewing process.

Question 4: The assignment is over, and what does it all mean?
When the assignment END time has passed, you can check your results. To help you understand your results, look at "How To Interpret Your Results" (CPRStudent_Results.pdf).