AN OVERVIEW OF CALIBRATED PEER REVIEW

JULIE REYNOLDS
Department of Biology and University Writing Program

OVERVIEW
Calibrated Peer Review (CPR, https://cpr.molsci.ucla.edu) is an online program that enables frequent writing assignments even in large classes and can reduce the time an instructor spends reading and assessing student writing.

Stage 1: Text entry. Students write an essay in response to the assignment given, then upload their work to their CPR course webpage.

Stage 2: Calibration and review. Students read and evaluate three essays based on a series of questions (both the calibration essays and the questions are written by the instructor). In order to "pass" this stage, the student must answer a stated proportion of the questions correctly (thus, "calibrating" their ability to assess the quality of the writing.) After students pass the calibration stage, they read and evaluate three of their peers’ essays (essays are exchanged randomly and anonymously). Finally, each student evaluates their own writing in light of what they have learned through this process.

Stage 3: Results. Students are given a grade based on the quality of their own writing (calculated as the average score assigned by three classmates), their performance on the calibration portion of the assignment, their performance on the peer review portion, and their self-evaluation. The weighting of these four factors relative to each other is determined by the instructor for each assignment.

CPR offers instructors the choice of creating their own writing assignments or using the CPR assignment library.

SPONSORS
- Duke Center for Instructional Technology
- Biology Department
- CPR funding provided by the National Science Foundation and by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

BENEFITS
- Gives students practice writing
- Students gain experience analyzing writing
- Valuable tool for students who learn by example

TECHNOLOGY USED
- Calibrated Peer Review

LIMITATIONS
- No revision process integrated into the program
- Substantial start-up time for instructor and students
- Runs on “CPR time”