

# What is "Calibrated Peer Review" (CPR) and Why Are We Doing It?

Employers often identify communication skills as the most important characteristics of a prospective employee immediately following graduation from college. Despite its importance, most of you get few chances to work on your writing skills after some initial English composition classes. Even classes that assign term papers typically teach more about research skills than writing skills because you get very little feedback. 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 chemistry class, we will be circumventing this problem using a web-based program, called Calibrated Peer Review (CPR). This will be part of your lab grade. You'll get practice and feedback on a regular basis, even in our large class; at the same time you will gain the critical evaluation skills that employers want.

Calibrated Peer Review (CPR<sup>®</sup>) is web-based software designed to increase the amount of writing done while teaching other subjects, including chemistry. 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 1: You will read and/or do the necessary background information on a chemistry topic, then write an essay about the topic following guidelines, and submit this on-line through the CPR program. Then wait until Time Period 2 begins.

(2) Time Period 2: 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. This means you can write a so-so essay, but still get points because you recognize that you could have done better.

## Question 1: This is my first CPR, how do I access my assignment?

- Go to the CPR Login Page (<http://cpr2.molsci.ucla.edu/cpr/cpr/login.asp>)
- Follow the New Users; First time login link.
- Select your school from the list.
- Enter your student ID - DO NOT USE DASHES.

**(If the server does NOT recognize your ID, contact Ms. Traci Zaragoza, the Administrator, by e-mail at [tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu](mailto:tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu). Please include your Instructor's name and Section.)**

Complete your profile by creating a password and a challenge question. The server will give you your CPR username.

*Write these down somewhere that you can find them. Please choose a challenge question that you CAN remember the answer for (in the future). Your Laboratory Notebook is a good place!*

You will use this username and the password you created to access all your CPR assignments. If you are using CPR in more than one course, this username will allow you to access all of them. **If your student ID is NOT recognized by the server, check with Ms. Traci Zaragoza, the CPR Administrator ([tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu](mailto:tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu)) right away - include your Instructor's name and section.)**

The Student Handout is on the back. You can also find it on your instructor's website available through the First Year Chemistry's website at <http://www.chem.tamu.edu/class/fyp> (You'll need Adobe Acrobat Reader.)

A good CPR Tutorial, designed by Dr. Ken Chapman, Economics, CSU Northridge, can be found at <http://econ1.csun.edu/cpr/tutorial/default.htm>, called "CSUN CPR tutorial for the first time user."

## Question 2: What do I do if I need help in writing?

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. Ask your TA or instructor to give you some pointers to help guide you. Also there is a University Writing Center in Evans Library. UWC is located on the second floor of the Evans Library in 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 online at <http://uwc.tamu.edu/>. Appointments are recommended, but the consultants will take walk-ins as time allows. You can even submit your paragraph on-line for advice. For more information call (979) 458-1455 or send questions by e-mail to [uwc@tamu.edu](mailto:uwc@tamu.edu).

## Question 3: How do I format my TEXT entry?

You will want to use the minimum of HTML tags in your paragraph, because they count as words. One suggestion: write your text using a word processor, paste it into the CPR Text Entry box, then add the HTML tags, given at the bottom of the back of this handout. If you make a mistake in your HTML, your TEXT could be "invisible" to your reviewers and you will receive a lower score. Use the PREVIEW button often. If the PREVIEW button isn't working for you, try a different computer - it may be browser sensitive. Here is a link to a tutorial on using HTML with CPR. It was designed by Dr. Steven Verhey, Biology Department, Central Washington University: <http://www.cwu.edu/~verheys/howto.html>, but you will only really need the tags given in this handout.

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. The CPR Administrator, Traci Zaragoza ([tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu](mailto:tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu)) can verify this also. 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 obtained at each stage of the assignment, download "Understanding Your Results," on your instructor's main webpage obtained through <http://www.chem.tamu.edu/class/fyp> You'll need Adobe Acrobat Reader.

## CPR™ Student Handout

### Getting Started with CPR:

- You need a browser (Netscape Navigator v. 4/1ater or Internet Explorer v. 4/1ater) and an Internet connection (Bruin Online, EarthLink, etc.).
- You will need to know your CPR Username and your password to access the CPR program. If you have already accessed the program in a previous term and have forgotten your login information, then you can retrieve this information by connecting to the CPR login page (<http://cpr2.molsci.ucla.edu/cpr/cpr/login.asp>) and selecting "Users: forgot your login information?" If you are a new user and do not know your CPR ID , then your must complete the account profile. All New Users MUST complete their account profile.

### To complete an account profile:

1. Go to the following URL: <http://cpr2.molsci.ucla.edu/cpr/cpr/login.asp>
2. Select "New Users: first time logging in?"
3. Select **YOUR SCHOOL** from the pull down menu and enter your Student ID - **DO NOT INCLUDE DASHES** . You may have to wait until the administrator gets your ID into the system. Check with your instructor. If there is still a problem, contact the administrator at [tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu](mailto:tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu) - include your instructor's name and section.
4. Next, you will select a password. You will also need to enter a challenge question and answer. If you forget your login information, this challenge question will be asked of you to confirm your identity , so choose a question/answer that you will not forget and that others do not know.
5. Next, there is a field to enter your email address; this is optional.
6. Upon completion of your account profile, you will be given your unique **CPR username**. Make sure that you save your **CPR username**. You will need it every time you access CPR.

### Before starting your first CPR assignment:

- After entering your *CPR* username and password, you will be directed to take a 10-minute tour .
- Click on the "CPR Guided Tour" link and then the "Taking an Assignment" link- .Take the short PreTest for new users.  
All information necessary to complete the PreTest can be found in the CPR Tour: "Taking an Assignment." You must take this tour prior to taking the PreTest.

### Assignment Structure -Both stages are required to complete the assignment. There are two parts to a CPR assignment:

- Stage 1: <begins with Assignment Start Time>  
During this stage you will
- a) explore source material about the assignment topic.
  - b) write about the topic.
- <ends with Text Entry End Time>

**SUGGESTION:** Save your text to your local computer or to a floppy disk before submitting it. This will serve as a backup **should a problem occur** during the submission process.

- Stage 2: <begins with Text Entry End Time>  
During this stage you will evaluate
- a) example texts written specifically for this assignment. These evaluations are called " calibrations."
  - b) three texts written by your classmates. This stage is called "reviews."
  - c) your own text. This stage is called the "self-assessment."
- <Ends with Assignment End Time >

### After the assignment ends:

You can now check your assignment results. For clarification, go see "Understanding Your Results," on your instructor's main webpage obtained through <http://www.chem.tamu.edu/class/fyp/>

### To access CPR technical support:

- 1) Check with your instructor .
- 2) Send email to Ms. Traci Zaragoza, the Administrator at [tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu](mailto:tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu).  
If you are a student, include your CPR username, instructor's name, course and section.

### Important Points:

- CPR uses a centralized UCLA Pacific time and does **NOT** use the time on a local computer (i.e. your home computer). You can check the CPR time by clicking on the "CPR Time" link on the top of the assignment screens.
- CPR depends on **ALL students** finishing assignments. Problems should be reported **immediately** to **Ms. Traci Zaragoza, the Administrator** ([tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu](mailto:tzaragoza@mail.chem.tamu.edu) - include Instructor's name and section) to insure the highest possible completion rate by students.
- Always save your text entry on the local computer, a separate computer, and/or a floppy disk before submitting 'it to CPR.
- Most Internet Service Providers (ISP's, like Bruin On-Line, Earth link, and MSN) terminate Internet connections that have not been used for more than 15 -20 minutes. If a connection is terminated and you try to submit work, it will be **LOST**.
- CPR does **NOT** work with the AOL browser. Make your internet connection with AOL, then switch to the Internet Explorer (4.x or 5.x) or the Netscape (4.7x) browsers.

### HTML Tags for formatting your text: USE AS FEW AS YOU CAN - THEY COUNT AS WORDS.

- <B> text </B> Displays the enclosed text in boldface; <B>Hi</B> gives **Hi**.  
<I> text </I> Displays the enclosed text in italics; <I>Hi</I> gives *Hi*.  
<SUB> text </SUB> Displays the enclosed text subscripted; H<SUB>2</SUB>O gives H<sub>2</sub>O.  
<SUP> text </SUP> Displays the enclosed text superscripted; Na<SUP>+1 </SUP> gives Na<sup>+1</sup> ,  
<BR> Inserts a line break after the text.  
<P> or </P> Inserts a blank line after the text. Always preview your text. If the preview button isn't working, try a different computer.