

The roles and training of the RG peer moderator can be summarized as follows:

- Attends training sessions offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the University of Toronto, Scarborough that focused on how to engage students in group settings, building effective communication skills, and strategies to employ when students are reluctant to participate. These training sessions were normally offered to facilitated study group (FSG) peer moderators. More detailed information about these training sessions are available through the CTL at UTSC by emailing the peer facilitation strategist, Cindy Bongard, at: bongard@utsc.utoronto.ca
- Meets with the course instructor weekly throughout the term to discuss any issues encountered with the group. At these meetings, the instructor communicated effective practices based on her reading of the peer-based learning literature. In addition, the RG peer moderator also read pedagogical literature that described strategies to manage group dynamics and promote student participation.
- Does not evaluate (grade) the performance of students and maintains a safe environment in which everyone feels included and students can openly voice their concerns, questions and views.
- Clearly communicates expectations to students for the RGs and ensures active participation (e.g. participation by all; no spectators allowed!)
- Helps organize the group at the beginning of each RG with regards to the overall structure of that week's paper discussion. For example, the moderator may ask students to decide if the assigned paper was "methods-heavy" or "data-heavy", thereby defining the focus of that week's discussion. A detailed timeline of a representative RG session is provided on page 4 of this file.
- Guides the discussion around the paper but does not take part in the actual discussion. As an example, the peer moderator ensures that the group does not lose sight of the "big-picture" if focus shifts for extended periods to minor experimental details.
- Encourages the group to think about whether a figure/ method/ result validates the overall claims stated in the paper. This is particularly important given that a major learning goal for this course is development of critical thinking skills.

Timeline of a typical 60-minute RG session as detailed by the RG moderator.

Timeline	Events
Minute 1-5 Duration: 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome students to RG • Remind those present of the assigned article that will be discussed that day • Pass around the attendance sign-in sheet • Gauge familiarity of the paper within the group by way of asking who has read the paper and to what extent (how thoroughly) • Asks what the most challenging part of the assigned paper was (i.e. methodology, interpreting results, unfamiliarity with the overall topic etc.)
Minutes 5-10 Duration: 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign groups of 4-5 randomly (usually based on where students were sitting, but ensuring that group composition varied each week) • Based on the feedback gathered from the first 5 minutes, and the overall focus of the paper, ask students to frame their discussions in the context of either the results or the methodology. • Assign paper subsections to groups randomly
Minutes 10-30 Duration: 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind each group to discuss their respective subsection focusing on key findings, questions, criticisms, methodology techniques or unclear scientific vocabulary • Move around the room listening to the discussions of each group to ensure groups are on track and each member is engaged and actively participating • Remind students to keep notes during discussions
Minutes 30 – 55 Duration: 25 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request groups reconvene to the larger group • Move across the room to each group (on the most logical order based on the flow of the paper) • Request that a representative from each group stand up to first summarize their section (asking input from other members when necessary) and then pose questions or criticisms back to the entire group • Re-direct those questions back to the group giving everyone else an opportunity to weigh in, and opens the floor for discussion • If there are any unresolved questions, remind students to take it back to class for the instructor
Minutes 55-60 Duration: 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students for feedback on how they felt the session went (which were noted down for the weekly meetings between the moderator and course instructor) • Ask students what they feel they should go back and review or read up on before the class discussion