**Activity Title:** Understanding and Critiquing the Peer Review Process

**Goal:** The primary goal of the activity or assignment is for students to develop an increased understanding of the peer review process and how it is connected to the authority or credibility of different information sources. Students will also be encouraged to consider some of the criticisms that have been raised about the process and consider alternatives for determining authoritative sources within a field or discipline.

**Learning Outcomes:**

* Explain the basic process of scholarly peer review
* Explore how the peer review process is used to identify or establish authoritative or credible works within a field
* Critically examine the peer review process, considering it in connection with issues such as access and bias

**Framework Concepts:**

* Authority is Constructed and Contextual
* Information Has Value
* Information Creation as a Process

**Description of Activity:**

1. Have students complete a short writing activity in which they briefly describe their understanding of the scholarly peer review process. Guiding questions could include:
   1. How does the process work? Who are the peers? What do they do?
   2. What is the goal of the process?
   3. Why are peer-reviewed sources often considered of greater authority than other sources?
2. Provide students with resources to help them better understand the peer review process. Recommendations include:
   1. [Peer Review in Three Minutes](https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/videos/peer-review-three-minutes) (North Carolina State University)
   2. [Authority: Understanding Peer Review](https://research.lib.buffalo.edu/authority/understandingpeerreview) (University of Buffalo)
   3. [The Peer Review Process](https://libguides.csudh.edu/peer-review) (California State University, Dominguez Hills)
3. Have students reflect on how the descriptions of peer review in the provided resources compare with their initial understanding of the process
4. Provide students with resources to help them understand some of the criticisms concerning the peer review process. Recommendations include:
   1. [The Peer Review Process](https://libguides.csudh.edu/peer-review) (California State University, Dominguez Hills)
   2. [Scholarly Peer Review](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scholarly_peer_review#Allegations_of_bias_and_suppression) (Wikipedia—especially the criticisms subheading)
   3. Tennant, Jonathan P., and Tony Ross-Hellauer. "The limitations to our understanding of peer review." *Research Integrity and Peer Review* 5, no. 1 (2020): 1-14.
5. Ask students (in pairs or groups) to identify 2-3 concerns related to peer review they found in their reading. Write the concerns on a shared whiteboard or padlet/jamboard (or another online discussion board).
6. Guide students through a discussion of these concerns and have them identify alternatives or revisions to the peer review process.
7. Finally, have students complete another short writing updating their original description of the peer review process.