

Building Feedback Strategies for Writing Assignments

Providing constructive and effective feedback on student writing is crucial for promoting learning and improvement. Here are several strategies faculty can use to deliver impactful feedback:

Best Practices.

- **Provide Timely Feedback**
 - Deliver feedback promptly to ensure students can remember their writing process and understand the critiques. Quick turnaround helps students apply feedback to future assignments while the material is still fresh.
- **Provide Specific and Actionable Comments**
 - Avoid vague comments like “good job” or “needs improvement.” Instead, provide specific, actionable feedback. For example, instead of saying “clarify this point,” say “your argument in paragraph three would be clearer if you included a specific example from the text.”
- **Provide Balanced Feedback**
 - Strive to balance positive and constructive feedback. Highlight strengths as well as areas for improvement. Acknowledge what students did well to build their confidence and encourage continued effort.
- **Provide Focused Feedback**
 - Concentrate on a few key areas rather than overwhelming students with too many critiques. This can include thesis clarity, argument coherence, evidence integration, or grammatical accuracy. Prioritize based on the assignment’s goals and the student’s needs.
- **Use a Rubric**
 - Provide a detailed rubric outlining the criteria for success. Rubrics help students understand expectations and offer a clear framework for feedback. They ensure consistency and fairness in grading and make feedback more transparent.
- **Encourage Self-Assessment**
 - Incorporate self-assessment components where students evaluate their own work before submission. This encourages critical thinking and self-awareness, helping students identify their strengths and weaknesses.

- **Provide Dialogic Feedback**
 - Engage in a dialogue rather than a monologue. Encourage students to ask questions about the feedback and offer opportunities for revisions. This can be done through one-on-one conferences, written responses, or digital platforms.
- **Provide Written and Oral Feedback**
 - Combine written feedback with oral discussions. Written comments provide a permanent record for students to refer back to, while oral feedback can clarify misunderstandings and offer immediate responses to questions.
- **Highlight Examples**
 - Use examples from their work or exemplary models from peers (with permission) to illustrate points. Showing concrete examples of effective writing can help students understand abstract feedback.
- **Use Feed-Forward Feedback**
 - Focus not only on past performance but also on how students can improve future assignments. Offer strategies and resources to help them develop their skills over time. Feed-forward promotes continuous learning and development.
- **Minimize Negative Language**
 - Frame feedback in a constructive manner. Instead of saying “this is wrong,” suggest alternatives, such as “consider revising this section to improve clarity.” Positive language fosters a growth mindset and encourages improvement.
- **Employ Cultural and Individual Sensitivity**
 - Be aware of cultural and individual differences in writing styles and responses to feedback. Tailor feedback to support diverse learning styles and backgrounds, ensuring it is respectful and inclusive.
- **Utilize Technology**
 - Leverage technology tools such as track changes in word processors, audio feedback recordings, or educational platforms that facilitate interactive feedback. These tools can enhance clarity and accessibility of feedback.
- **Encourage Peer Review**
 - Incorporate peer review sessions where students critique each other’s work. Peer feedback fosters collaborative learning and exposes students to diverse perspectives.
- **Encourage Continuous Improvement**
 - Solicit feedback from students on the feedback process itself. This meta-feedback can provide insights into its effectiveness and areas for improvement, ensuring that feedback methods evolve to meet students’ needs.

Research verifies that students want to be read (Eodice et al., 2016), thus, effective feedback is a dynamic and essential part of teaching writing. With these strategies, faculty can provide meaningful feedback that not only addresses the immediate assignment but also promotes long-term student learning and development.

References

Eodice, M, Geller, A. E., & Lerner, N. (2016). *The Meaningful Writing Project*. Utah State University Press.