

Faculty Conversations About Teaching

How to Increase Quality Feedback and Save Time!



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What I've Tried

I practice “**feedforward**” over “**feedback**.” That is, focus your comments on what you would like students to do differently to make their drafts stronger instead of on what they have not done well.

- Offer suggestions for how the student might solve a particular problem in a draft or draw stronger connections in their work. (e.g. “As a reader, I felt you needed a little more explanation of X.” Or, “I don’t see you using the ideas we discussed in class here, how might you use the discussion we had about X to extend this paragraph.”)
- Set out to respond to the student’s ideas, grasp of content, or presentation of information over simply noting the “problems.” Even just one “global” comment (for instance, about how the student has or has not fulfilled the criteria of the assignment) can coach the student toward stronger work.

I am exploring alternatives to traditional teacher comments. Discussions about drafts-in-process and effective models may be as helpful as written feedback.

- You might ask students to meet with you in one-on-one conferences or in small groups; these often take less time than sitting down with each paper individually;
- Class discussions of the goals for writers in your field can help students understand why and how their writing matters;
- Models and examples are often very helpful for students and can save you time by establishing what you value and comment upon. You can refer back to that paper in your comments, as well.
- Experiment with audio comments using screen capture software such as Jing or Audacity.

Scholars of student writing development have suggested that a focus on sentence-level error may be counterproductive for the struggling student writer. (And, a focus on error may misdirect your attention away from what a student has to say or the development of relevant content/knowledge.)

Teaching Tips

- Use a system like Haswell’s “minimal marking” to send the message to students that effective writing includes attention to surface-level presentation, and that they are responsible for learning about the errors they make and how to polish their own drafts.
- Point out one or two sentence-level issues in an early paragraph of a draft; then, ask the student to find other examples of this issue in later paragraphs.
- Build in time for revisions, multiple drafts, peer review/response, or a trip to the writing center for higher stakes assignments. Even strong writers benefit from slowing down, talking with others, and workshopping their works-in-progress.

Faculty Conversations about Teaching: How to Increase Quality Feedback and Save Time!



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What I've Tried

Asynchronous video feedback: Especially when students are completing complex projects, I find that I can provide better feedback in less time using video. It also allows me to establish my social presence when I teach online. The video can contain a webcam recording, screencast recording, or a combination of both.

Synchronous video or audio feedback: Typically, online learning is asynchronous because students require or enjoy the flexibility. However, there are times when it is more efficient and effective to speak with the students synchronously on a phone or video call.

Collective feedback: At times, it is not worth the time to provide each student with personalized feedback comments and a collective feedback is sufficient. For instance, in discussion board activities I will provide some students with personalized feedback but then post a collective summary feedback comment to the class.

Three before me: I commonly require peer feedback before I provide them with feedback myself. I find that it can a valuable learning experience for students that hopefully saves me time as well because the project has already gone through revisions before it gets to me.

What I'm Exploring

- I would like to explore how video feedback can be used to support creativity.
- I also would like to research how students use video to provide feedback to other students.
- I'm also interested how English language learners react to video feedback and how helpful closed captured video feedback is for students who have difficulty hearing.

Recommended Readings

West, R., Jay, J., Armstrong, M., & Borup, J. (2017). "Picturing them right in front of me": Guidelines for implementing video communication in online and blended learning. *Tech Trends*, 61, 461-469. Accessible at <http://rdcu.be/tRrA>

Atwater, C. R., Borup, J., Baker, R. E., & West, R. (2017). Student perceptions of video communication in an online sport and recreation studies graduate course. *Sports Management Education Journal*, 11(1), 3-12.

Thomas, R. A., West, R. E., & Borup, J. (2017). An analysis of instructor social presence in online text and asynchronous video feedback comments. *Internet and Higher Education*, (33), 61-73.

Jered Borup is professor-in-charge of the Blended and Online Learning in Schools Master's and Certificate programs in CEHD. He has designed & regularly teaches fully online courses, including EDIT 710: Online Teaching Essentials.

His current research interests include developing online learning communities and identifying support systems that adolescent learners require to be successful in online environments.

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TRY IT!

How might you apply these ideas, tips & best practices to a course you are currently teaching?

What additional information or resources might you need in order to try it?

For info and guidance, please contact the Stearns Center for Teaching & Learning (4th Floor, Innovation Hall)



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