



Teaching with Writing (TWW) Tip Getting students to address feedback

Rationale: Feedback on writing is important at the pre-writing, drafting, and revision stages, but students often misunderstand or even ignore it. Providing feedback strategically can increase the likelihood that students will use it to improve their writing.

Tip #1: Feedback is most effective when it's given *at the right time*.

- Students pay the most attention to feedback when it offers concrete ways to improve their performance on the specific task that is before them. [Focus comments on particular, meaningful actions](#) students can take to improve.
 - For example, students don't always know what to do when they are told a sentence or idea is simply "unclear"; suggesting specific ways to clarify or particular resources to consult gives students a concrete sense of what they can do to improve.
- [Prioritize comments](#) according to what you want students to do in their revision; [too many comments](#) on low-priority issues can overwhelm students.
 - For example, if a top priority is to improve a student's use of evidence, your feedback should focus there (and not, for example, on grammar).
- [Studies suggest](#) that feedback that comes "often and regularly" improves performance better than more detailed feedback that is provided only once. Less extensive feedback during the drafting process is more valuable than more extensive feedback on final revisions.

Tip #2: Develop strategies that explicitly require students to address feedback.

- Incorporate the use of feedback into the assignment process itself; for example, requiring a "[revision memo](#)" forces students to think self-consciously about the process of revising and the choices they make in revision.
- [Design writing assignments](#) so that they [scaffold writing skills](#); doing so helps you target feedback on the specific skills students will need in later work.
 - Whenever possible, incorporate building block assignments that allow for moments of "work-in-progress" feedback. Such feedback is more effective for improving students' performance (and helps you keep them on track).
- Break students out of the view that writing tasks are isolated events by framing assignments in terms of larger goals. [A motivated student](#) is more likely to incorporate feedback into their future work in your class and beyond.

Learn more:

- Graham Gibbs and Claire Simpson, "[Conditions Under Which Assessment Supports Students' Learning](#)"
- David J. Nichol and Debra Macfarlane-Dick, "[Formative Assessment and Self-Regulated Learning: A Model and Seven Principles of Good Feedback Practice.](#)"
- University of Minnesota, [Teaching with Writing: Responding and Grading.](#)
- University of Minnesota, [Teaching with Writing: Assignments and Activities.](#)

Further support: Visit us online at <http://writing.umn.edu/tww>. To schedule a phone, email, or face-to-face teaching consultation, [click here](#).

Our purpose is to provide practical strategies for teaching with writing. Our goal is to offer timely and pragmatic support to faculty members and instructors who teach with writing in undergraduate and graduate courses in all disciplinary areas.