

# FEEDBACK TOOLS FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

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# LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants will be able to:

1. Discuss *research-based strategies* that avoid common grading and feedback issues.
2. Effectively and efficiently grade and provide feedback on writing assignments.

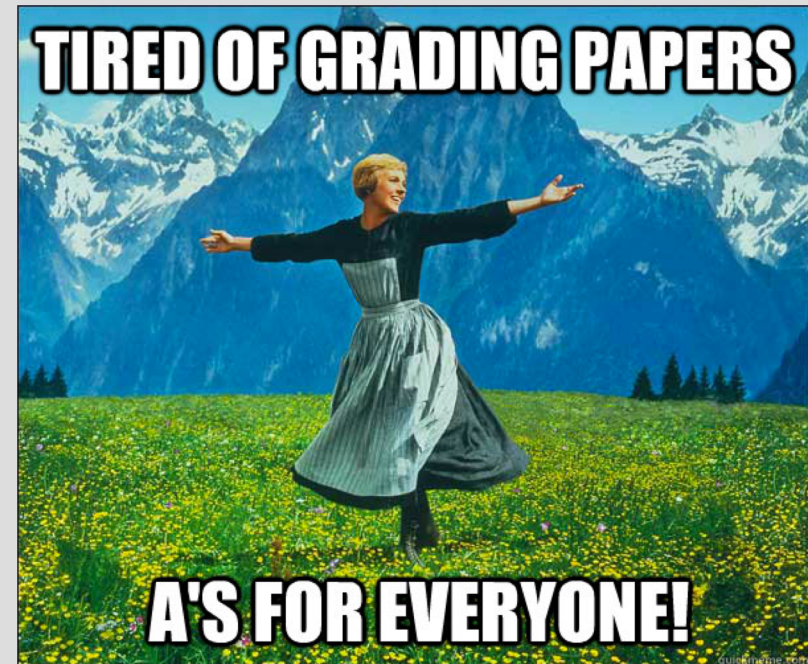
## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

- What issues do you face when grading and providing feedback on writing assignments?
- Please write each issue on a separate sticky note.
- Please try to limit to three issues.

# WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: THE ISSUES

Issues:

- Takes a lot of time to grade and provide adequate feedback
- Need to be consistent across papers
- Want to be timely/quick return
- Disappointing submissions





## TIP 1: DRAFT-PLUS-REWORK

- Without encouraging or requiring drafts, students likely won't draft
- Provide formative feedback, rather than summative feedback
- Require a response (point)
- Closer to actual process of writing

### What is a first draft?

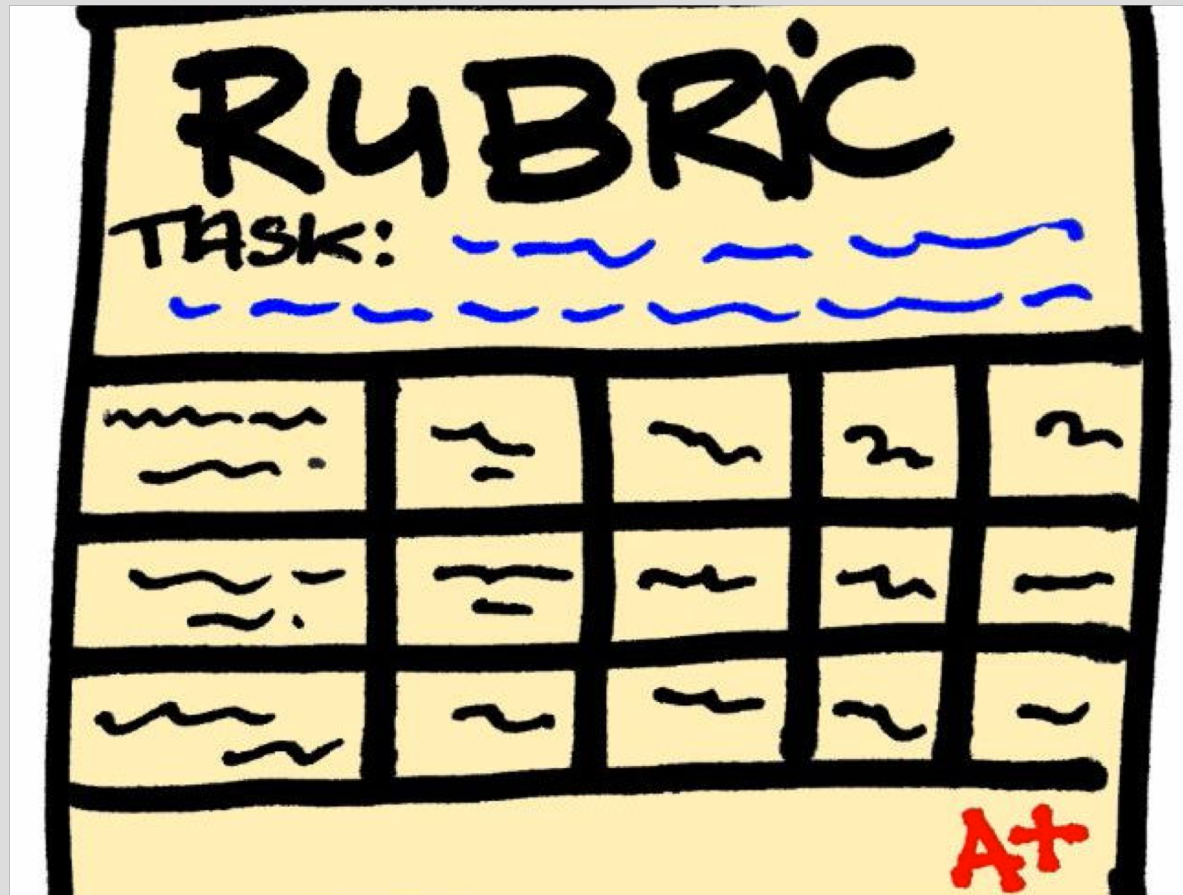
- A polished version of your story? ❌
- Writing you edit as you go? ❌
- A rigid blueprint for your book? ❌
- A first effort to tell your story from start to finish? ✔️
- A step towards your final draft? ✔️
- A concrete piece of writing you can work through with a writing coach or editor? ✔️

## TIP 2: CHUNKING AND SCAFFOLDING WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

- Smaller, shorter, unique writing assignments (proposals, theatre plans, blogs)
- Or writing assignments that build on each other (literature review, methodology, introduction, results, discussion)
- Distributes grading time over the semester
- Depends on learning outcomes
- Formative assessment vs. summative

## TIP 3: PROVIDE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA IN ADVANCE

- How?



# QQC&U WRITTEN COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	Milestones 2	Benchmark 1
<b>Context of and Purpose for Writing</b> <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
<b>Content Development</b>	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
<b>Genre and Disciplinary Conventions</b> <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
<b>Sources and Evidence</b>	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
<b>Control of Syntax and Mechanics</b>	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

## TIP 4: HOLISTIC RATHER THAN PROXIMATE FEEDBACK

*climbed* *what kind of tower?* *looked like a quilt*  
Carl ~~reached the top of~~ the tower and looked over miles of Indiana country. From this distance the fields had the look of a quilt, intersecting fabrics of soy and corn folding over the green plains toward the Thornhope elevators a mile in the distance, like twin bronze statues at the gate of the valley. The sun seemed to bake the earth, left dried gullies of red clay crusting along the highway behind a wild hair of clover and timothy. Everything seemed to make sense from this vantage point, the farmhouse appeared as a centerpiece in the landscape, *??* *meu* ~~a place in the universe things revolved around, were established.~~

**TIP 5: ENSURE  
YOUR  
FEEDBACK IS  
ACCESSIBLE**

Table 1. Main themes (psychological processes) and subthemes (barriers).

Psychological process		Barriers to feedback recipience
(1) AWARENESS of what the feedback means, and its purpose	➡	Inability to decode feedback Limited 'feedback mental model'
(2) COGNISANCE of strategies by which the feedback could be implemented	➡	Poor knowledge of appropriate strategies Poor knowledge of available opportunities
(3) AGENCY to implement strategies	➡	Sense of disempowerment Difficulties with translating feedback into action
(4) VOLITION to scrutinise feedback and implement strategies	➡	Lack of proactivity Lack of receptiveness

(Winstone, Rowntree, & Parker, 2017)

## TIP 6: LEVERAGE THE TECHNOLOGY

- Decide on pdf or word document- pros and cons to both
- Keep a document with common feedback
- Tools in Blackboard:
  - Highlight and comment
  - Written and oral feedback
  - Rubric

The screenshot displays the Blackboard 'Grade Assignment: Planet Paper' interface. The main content area shows a student's assignment titled 'Planet Paper' by Linda Herrera (Attempt 1 of 1). The assignment is powered by Crocodoc. The student's work is displayed with several feedback comments from Cathy Chu:

- Comment A:** Need a strong intro
- Comment B:** eliminate passive language
- Comment C:** You are going to have fun adding images to this presentation.

The right sidebar shows the 'Assignment Details' section, including the grade (85/100), the attempt date (10/21/13 11:52 AM), and the feedback message: 'You have a solid first pass. I pointed out one instance of passive voice, but want you to correct that throughout. Work on adding a great attention-getter to the beginning. I look forward to the next draft!'. The submission section shows the file 'planet\_durand.doc'.

## BEST PRACTICES

- Require students to respond (Fisher, Cavanagh, and & Bowles, 2011)
  - Allow revisions (formative; Shute, 2008)
- Timely (Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, & Morgan, 1991)
- Content critique > error correction
- Holistic > proximate feedback
- Don't use RED for feedback (Dukes & Albaesi, 2012)



## PUTTING THE TIPS INTO PRACTICE IN YOUR OWN COURSE

- Tip 1: Draft-Plus-Rework
- Tip 2: Chunking and Scaffolding Writing Assignments
- Tip 3: Provide Assessment Criteria in advance
- Tip 4: Holistic rather than Proximate Feedback
- Tip 5: Ensure your feedback is accessible
- Tip 6: Leverage the Technology

## REFERENCES

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## WRITTEN COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

- What assignments would work well for this rubric? Not work well?
- Which performance descriptors provide the most feedback?
- What additional feedback would you need to provide?