Responding Toward Revision

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❑ **Read quickly through a set of essays before commenting on them**.

Skimming through most or all of a set of essays allows you to define common problems and issues that you can address in class, rather than laboriously pointing them out, one after the other, on text after text.

❑ **Don't proofread students' writing for them.**

If an essay seems carelessly or hurriedly proofed, return it to its author for correction before commenting on it. If a student makes a particular sort of mistake repeatedly, mark it once and explain the problem. Then ask the student to go back through the essay in order to find and correct any other instances of this mistake. Confer with the student afterwards about any problems he or she might have encountered in doing so.

❑ **Offer focused advice towards revision.**

When commenting on work that students will go on to revise, don't overwhelm them with long lists of problems, questions, and directives. Instead, define two or three key tasks for each student to focus on in revising. Ask students to turn in prior drafts with your comments on them when they hand in their revisions, so you can check the work they've done in response to the issues you've defined.

❑ **Discuss student writings in class.**

Students can gain new and useful insights into their own writing through reading the work of their classmates and then discussing its strengths and limits. There are several ways of making student work visible in a course: You might ask students, for instance, to share drafts in small groups, to present their work for discussion by a seminar, to participate in panels or poster sessions, or to post their work to a class blog or listserv.

❑ **Use the resources for students and teachers of writing that your school offers.**

Most colleges and universities support Writing Centers where students can receive one-to-one feedback on writing they are doing for their courses. Many schools also provide online resources for writers. And Teaching Centers and Writing-in-the-Disciplines (WID) Programs often consult with faculty who are designing and teaching writing courses.