

Lecture 13.

The Role of Feedback in Writing

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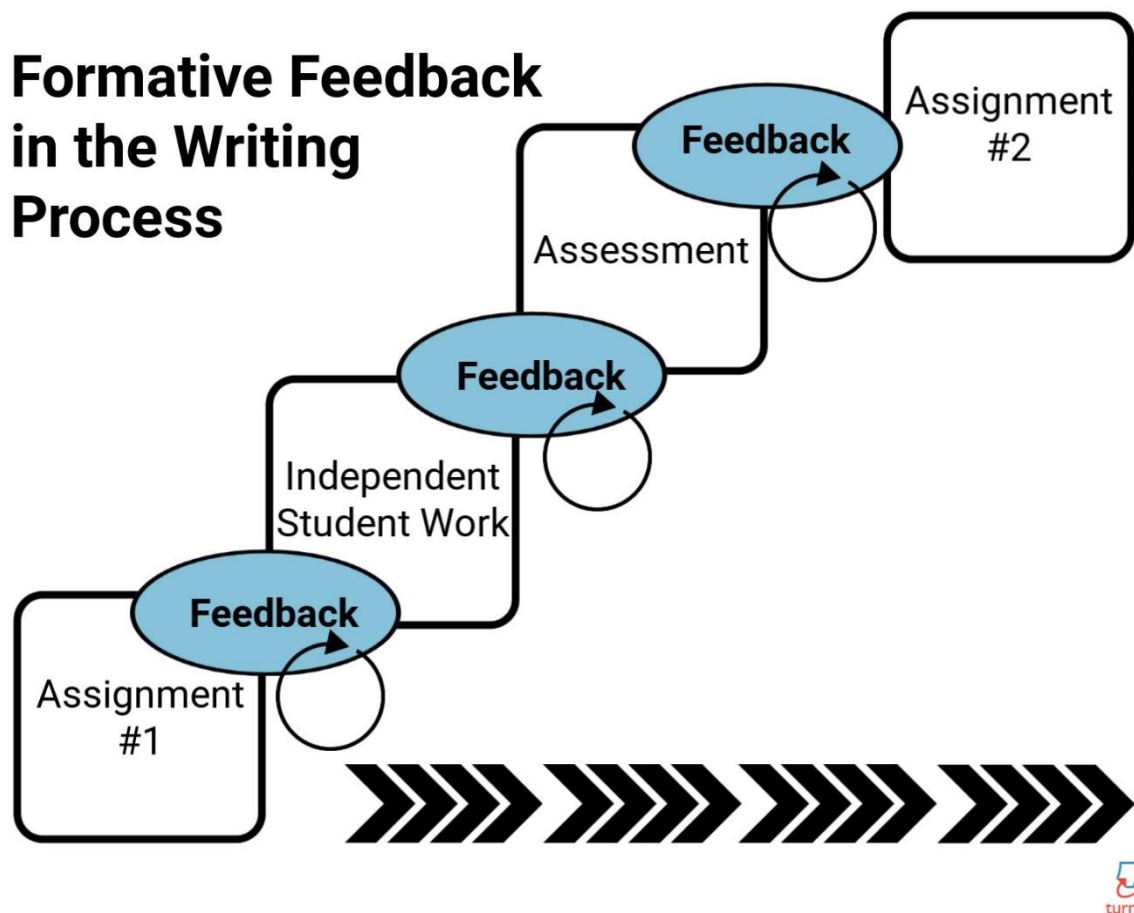
Feedback is a cornerstone of academic writing and plays an essential role in honing a student or researcher's skills. Whether you are writing essays, research papers, or a thesis, feedback offers a pathway to better clarity, argumentation, and structure. It can guide you toward more effective communication of ideas, ensuring your writing meets academic standards and contributes meaningfully to scholarly discussions.

However, many writers hesitate to seek feedback due to fear of criticism or uncertainty about how to apply it constructively. Understanding the role feedback plays and learning how to incorporate it effectively can significantly improve your academic writing. This article delves into the various aspects of feedback and how to use it to enhance your writing.

1. Understanding Different Types of Feedback

- **The Challenge:** Many writers believe feedback is simply about grammar and syntax corrections. In reality, feedback encompasses various levels of critique, from surface-level issues like punctuation to deeper concerns such as argument strength and idea development.
- **The Solution:** Know the types of feedback available and the purpose each serves:
- **Structural Feedback:** Focuses on the organization of your writing. It helps you understand if your ideas flow logically and if the structure supports your thesis or argument.

- **Content Feedback:** Examines the clarity, relevance, and depth of your ideas. This type of feedback ensures that your arguments are well-supported and that your writing contributes to the academic conversation.
- **Technical Feedback:** Addresses grammatical, syntactical, and stylistic issues. It ensures that your writing adheres to academic conventions and is free from errors.
- **Citation and Reference Feedback:** Ensures you're using sources properly and following the required citation style.



2. The Importance of Early Feedback

- **The Challenge:** Some writers wait until their paper is nearly finished before seeking feedback. This can lead to significant revisions later in the process, which can be both time-consuming and frustrating.
- **The Solution:** Seek feedback as early as possible, even at the outline or rough draft stage. Early feedback allows you to make course corrections before investing too much time in writing. It can prevent major structural or argumentation issues from becoming deeply embedded in your work. Moreover, early feedback offers new

perspectives that can enhance the direction of your writing, leading to stronger final papers.

3. Using Feedback to Strengthen Arguments

- **The Challenge:** Writers often struggle to present their arguments convincingly. Even if you feel your points are well-developed, feedback can reveal weaknesses or gaps in reasoning that you might overlook.
- **The Solution:** Use feedback to identify areas where your arguments could be more persuasive or where additional evidence is required. Feedback from peers, professors, or advisors can highlight unclear arguments, unsupported claims, or areas that need further research. Revising your work based on this feedback not only strengthens your argument but also ensures that your writing resonates more effectively with your intended audience.

4. Learning to Accept and Apply Feedback Constructively

- **The Challenge:** Receiving critical feedback can be tough, especially when you've invested significant time and effort into your writing. It's easy to feel defensive or overwhelmed by the suggested changes.
- **The Solution:** Approach feedback with an open mind and view it as an opportunity for improvement rather than criticism. Break feedback down into actionable steps. If someone suggests that your introduction lacks focus, for example, revise it by sharpening your thesis statement or reorganizing the opening paragraphs. It's also helpful to ask for clarification if any feedback is unclear, so you can implement it more effectively.

Guidelines for giving writing process feedback	
DO	DON'T
Focus on the task or process. Make it clear how well students are performing on a task or process and how they can improve.	Focus on the learner's ability. When feedback is perceived as judgmental, it produces a negative effect.
Be specific and clear. Students are most receptive to feedback that meets their needs (not too easy or too hard).	Be vague. Vague feedback may be viewed as frustrating, useless, or both, which can impede learning.
Promote a learning goal. Try to link specific feedback to a student's writing goal or to their individual writing process.	Combine feedback with grades. Students generally ignore feedback when it is given with a grade.
Elaborate, but in meaningful units. Explanatory feedback is effective when it's delivered at the right time and in the right way.	Comment on everything. Too much feedback is overwhelming. It can decrease motivation and promote inaction.
Give unbiased, objective feedback. Computer-based feedback is sometimes more effective due to students' perceived biases.	Use praise (or only do so sparingly). Praise often distracts students from a task or process and consequently from learning.

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5. The Role of Peer Feedback

- **The Challenge:** Many students rely solely on feedback from professors or advisors, neglecting the benefits of peer feedback. However, peers can offer valuable insights because they may have recently faced similar challenges or understand the audience for which you're writing.
- **The Solution:** Participate in peer review groups where you can exchange feedback with fellow students. Peers can offer fresh perspectives and catch issues that might escape your own or a professor's attention. They can also provide encouragement and support throughout the writing process. Offering feedback in return helps you refine your own editing and critique skills, which are essential for self-improvement as a writer.

6. The Role of Advisor and Mentor Feedback

- **The Challenge:** While peer feedback is valuable, feedback from experienced academics — such as advisors or mentors — provides depth and expertise that can

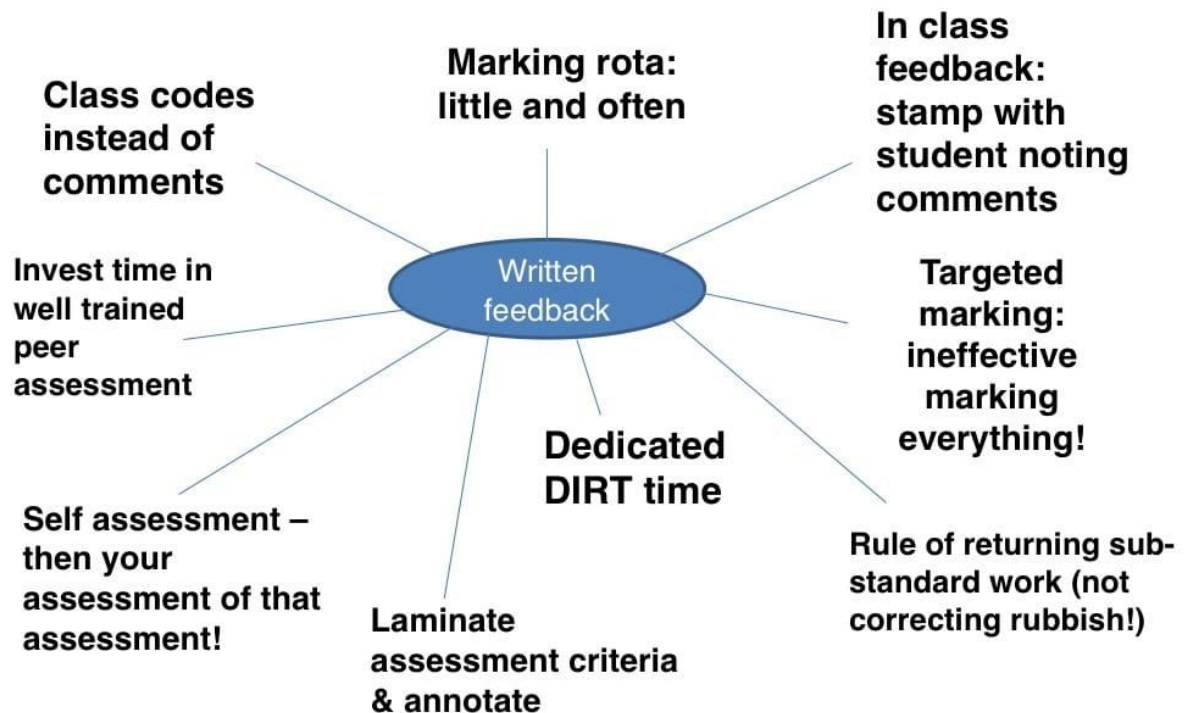
take your writing to the next level. However, students often struggle to interpret and apply the detailed feedback provided by these experts.

- **The Solution:** Engage with your advisor's or mentor's feedback deeply. Instead of simply making surface-level edits, reflect on how their suggestions align with the larger goals of your paper. Advisors often have a long-term perspective on your development as a scholar, so take their feedback as a chance to think about your work in the broader context of your academic career. Schedule regular check-ins to discuss feedback and ask for additional clarification where needed.

7. Continuous Revision: The Key to Improvement

- **The Challenge:** Writers often see revisions as a one-time task — something to be done after receiving feedback. However, academic writing is an iterative process that requires continuous refinement.
- **The Solution:** Make feedback and revision part of your regular writing routine. After each round of feedback, focus on making targeted revisions to improve specific areas. Remember that writing is a process of drafting and redrafting. Each revision brings you closer to a polished, well-argued piece. Keeping track of the feedback you receive over time can also help you identify recurring patterns and focus on areas where you consistently need improvement.

Improving written feedback



8. Using Technology to Facilitate Feedback

- **The Challenge:** It can be challenging to organize feedback, especially when you receive input from multiple sources. Losing track of suggestions or failing to incorporate all the feedback can negatively affect your final work.
- **The Solution:** Use technology to manage and organize your feedback. Collaboration tools like Google Docs allow multiple reviewers to comment on your work in real time. Academic writing tools like Scrivener or Microsoft Word's track changes feature help you monitor revisions and keep feedback in one place. Citation managers can also help with feedback on references and sources, ensuring that all suggested changes are implemented efficiently.

Incorporating feedback is vital for improving academic writing, but ensuring originality is equally important. Before submitting your next assignment, thesis, or research paper, run it through our **Plagiarism Checker Tool** by [Article Tool](#). Our tool helps you verify that your work is original and properly cited, giving you peace of mind. Sign up now for a **free trial** and take your academic writing to the next level

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