

Giving Effective Feedback on Assignments

Focus on higher-order and global concerns, to help students understand exactly where they are losing marks.

- Does the student understand the assignment and have all assignment requirements been fulfilled?
- Does the student understand the key concepts/readings/theories/issues that the assignment addresses?

Offer formative feedback, to show students what they need to work on next time. For example:

Formative

- Further discussion of X is crucial here
- Actually, Y argued that
- Overall, your argument needs development to be convincing. Next time, try...
- Sentence structure needs work.
[Come to my office hours or book an appointment with a Writing Centre]

Unhelpful

- Explain!
- No!
- This argument is weak
- awk

Saving Time

- Scan assignments before marking them so that you have an idea of what the main concerns are. Focus comments on these concerns.
- Do not spend a lot of time correcting grammar. At most demonstrate the number of errors in one paragraph, or add one comment pointing out that there are many grammar errors that the student needs to learn how to correct.
- Use a rubric to speed up commenting.
- If possible, consider giving global feedback on common problems in a tutorial or class, rather than commenting on each individual paper.