RESPONDING TO STUDENT WRITING ONLINE

OSUN Teaching Resources

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Some **Ways of Responding Digitally**

1. **Commenting Directly on a Piece of Writing:** This way of responding includes annotating a student's digital text, as well as offering comments (using comment boxes) and notes throughout the body of the paper. In some ways this practice mirrors the way we read papers with a pen in hand, leaving marginal notes as we go.

2. **Rubrics:** When assigning a piece of writing that will be graded, you might also share a rubric with students so that they know how their writing will be assessed. This rubric can be very helpful when offering feedback online. Students can see where their work falls on the rubric while also getting a sense of what they need to do in order to improve.

3. **Audio Comments:** Record a sound file of your voice offering feedback on student work. You can do this using the voice memo app on your phone, or by using free tools like [Audacity](#), [Voice Recorder](#) (Google App), [Read & Write](#)(Chrome Extension).

4. **Video Comments:** Record a short video of you commenting on student work. You might talk through your comments or you can record your screen as you walk a student through your reactions and observations. Quicktime and iMovie both have relatively straightforward features that enable you to record yourself and/or your screen. There are also a number of free online apps that do the same thing, like [Screencastify](#) (Chrome Extension).

Helpful Tips to Keep in Mind

- Online learning is text heavy, particularly if students are working asynchronously. Instructor responses should motivate students to learn, so the goal is to be **direct** and **specific.**
- The pace of the virtual world is quick, this means that students expect some kind of response from faculty more frequently than they might in person. It is helpful to **let students know when they can expect to receive feedback** on written work (in 5 days? 10 days?). Having a timeline in mind will help ease anxiety and keep students motivated.
- Just as with in person comments, students value feedback that is **forward looking instead of corrective**. Ask questions for further thought, but make sure the student knows what moment in their writing connects to that question. Similarly, offer advice or note places where the student might offer more details or explanation.
- **Peer Review** (if clearly structured) works well online. Create writing groups early in the semester so that students have a small cohort of peers that they work with consistently on their writing. This group should be composed of students who write at around the same level and can support each other without intimidation.

Sources & Links:

Fiock & Garcia, "[How to Give Your Students Better Feedback with Technology](#)" (2019)
[The Online Writing Instruction Community](#)

(Resources & Research has links to a number of helpful books, articles, and handouts)

[Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction](#) (Open Textbook)