

Responding Effectively to Student Writing

Sharon Zuber, English
Writing Resources Center
College of William and Mary

Keep Evaluation in Mind When Designing Assignments

- ~ Relate writing assignments to course objectives; sequence when possible
- ~ Identify purpose, audience, format
- ~ Explain grading criteria (rubrics)
- ~ Provide a sample assignment

“Set Students up for Success”

Responding to Student Work

- ◆ Read the entire paper before commenting
- ◆ Comment first on ideas and organization (global vs local).
- ◆ AVOID over-commenting; focus on one or two major points.
- ◆ Comment when it counts – more on draft, fewer on final copy. Put minimal comments on finished products that will not be revised.
- ◆ Use comments on drafts to prompt re-vision not just point out errors.

Responding to Student Work (cont'd)

- ◆ Grade using a rubric
- ◆ Make your comments legible; consider typing them or using the Comment function in WORD.
- ◆ End notes: emphasize your interest in the ideas and begin with a positive comment.
- ◆ When grading final papers, calibrate your grades

Final Tips

- ◆ Have confidence in what you know makes good writing.
- ◆ Prioritize the writing skills you want to emphasize.
- ◆ Relate these skills to course objectives.
- ◆ When it comes to grading:
“Less can be More.”

~Learning to write well is a lifelong process.