**The Writing Program @ The College of New Jersey, http://www.tcnj.edu/~writing**

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**FSP Workshop: “How to give helpful feedback on drafts even if you’re not a writing teacher” 5/12/11**

How do “faculty from disciplines outside of composition identif[y] themselves as they read and responded to student writing?”. . . “If they don’t see themselves as ‘writing teachers,’ who are they being as they read and write back to student writing?” And, who “did our colleagues from other disciplines want their students to be?”

--Frances Jeffrey and Bonita Selting, “Reading the Invisible Ink: Assessing the Responses of Non-Composition Faculty.” *Assessing Writing* 6.2 (1999): 183-84 emphasis added.

**I Why don’t students revise?**

**II What doesn’t work.**

**III What does work.**

**IV Some examples.**

**Tips**

* “Writing teachers must be aware that their written comments may communicate more to students than simply what is wrong. Students often have difficulty determining which of the teachers’ comments are most important. When 60 to 80 percent [of the comments] deal with editing issues, they infer that teachers give editing top priority when evaluating—an inference not necessarily accurate.”--Gary Dohrer, “Do Teachers’ Comments on Students’ Papers Help?” *College Teaching* 39.2 (Spring 1991): 8.
* “Student writers—just as apprentices in any other area—can’t target all their weaknesses simultaneously.” --Ransdell, D.R. “Directive Versus Facilitative Commentary.” *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* 26.3 (March 1999): 6.
* “Most teachers’ comments are not text-specific and could be interchanged, rubber-stamped, from text to text. . . . There seems to be among teachers an accepted, albeit unwritten canon for commenting on student texts. The uniform code of commands, requests, and pleadings demonstrates that the teacher holds license for vagueness while the student is commanded to be specific.” --Nancy Sommers, “Responding to and Evaluating Student Writing.” *College Composition and Communication* 33.2 (1982): 153.
* “One of the largest studies conducted on faculty response [by Connors and Lunsford] . . . found that spelling errors were the most common form of mark on a paper. After that, the top 10 technical corrections included: wrong word, comma errors (missing commas, comma splices), possessive apostrophe errors, vague pronoun references, wrong/missing inflective endings, wrong/missing prepositions, and sentence fragments.”--Lesa Stern and Amanda Solomon, “Effective Faculty Feedback: the Road Less Traveled.” *Assessing Writing* 11.1 (2006): 3.
* “To effect improvement in students’ writing, comments must confront students with issues situational to the text (Sommers 1982). They must raise questions in students’ minds that cause them to reevaluate their own purposes, and not merely to guess at the teacher’s purposes. Russell Hunt (1989) contends that ‘we don’t learn language by having our errors pointed out and corrected; we learn as a by-product of using language in order to do things we care about doing’ (p. 82).” --Gary Dohrer, “Do Teachers’ Comments on Students’ Papers Help?” *College Teaching* 39.2 (Spring 1991): 7.