QEP Workshop: Talking About Writing
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I. Philosophy
Try to meet the students where they are in the writing process. This means:

- Understanding the assignment
- Understanding the student’s understanding of the assignment
- Understanding where the student is in the writing process
- All of this information comes from getting the student to talk by asking questions

Where the student is in their work and how the student understands various pieces of the writing process and the technical elements of writing itself influences the way we try to give feedback. Essentially, we try to tailor the feedback based on the student.

II. Hierarchy of Concerns in Writing
- Trickle down technique.
- We start with the Higher Order Concerns and work our way through the paper. If criteria for a level is met, we focus on the next level.
- This list is not meant to create a hierarchy of importance, but rather a hierarchy of feedback, so we aren’t giving feedback on lower order concerns when the paper has no organization or makes no claim etc.
- The elements of this list can overlap.

- Higher Order Concerns
  - Thesis
  - Organization
  - Following requirements of assignment
  - Argument/claim/evidence

- Medium Order Concerns
  - Transitions
  - Topic sentences
  - Clarity

- Lower Order Concerns
  - Grammar
  - Spelling
  - Formatting

As we go through these various levels, we use a gradual release of responsibility to draw attention to issues in the paper.

III. Open-ended Questioning
Along with some specific direction, we also use open-ended questions to allow the student to come to some understanding of their own text through subtle guidance. These questions are designed to engage the student to talk about their work while giving subtle direction as to the focus of thought concerning their own work. This questioning is meant to do several things simultaneously…

- Validates the student’s work as something worth exploring and talking about
- Allows the student to come to conclusions on their own
- Builds confidence in the student as they see they can do it
- Teaches metacognitive examples/techniques the students can employ in their future writing

IV. Gradual Release of Responsibility
1. Focused Instruction (Hand-holding)
   - Identify the issue – point to the issue
   - How to identify the issue in the future
   - How to fix the issue
   - Reference a source on the issue

2. Guided Instruction (Bridging)
   - Identify the issue again and reference the first occurrence
   - Let them know to look for these recurring issues through the text

3. Independent Learning (Base Jumping)
   - The student has been given the tools to identify issues in the first two phases

V. Face-to-face vs. Email/Online
We try to use these techniques in both email paper and face-to-face work with students. Instead of pointing out every single mistake the student is making, we focus on a few issues, draw attention to those issues, and put the student in charge.

VI. The instructor as collaborator and evaluator
The consultant/instructor can be a collaborator during the writing process. It is not until the final copy of the writing that the instructor becomes an evaluator.

- Why is this important?
  - Models the collaborative process that writing should be
  - Scaffolds the writing process by using feedback to influence revision
  - Creates conversation validating the student’s writing giving purpose to voice
  - To approach the writing a collaborative reader rather than just an evaluator