Ways of Responding

Mode of Response	Use
Conferences	Conferencing involves a one to one meeting between the student and teacher. Since conferences replace the traditional method of grading stacks of papers, a decision regarding conferencing doesn't necessarily mean spending more time but rather involves how an instructor wishes to spend the time needed to respond to student writing. *Good conferences are conversations where the student does most of the talking.* It is important, then, to involve the student as fully as possible. This can be accomplished by requiring the student to show up for conferences with a written agenda for the meeting. This agenda can include class materials as well as specific questions about the writing to be discussed. Successful conferencing techniques include questioning the student about her writing, and resisting the urge to tell the student exactly what to do in a mini-lecture. Conferences can be conducted for any purpose, including the communication of grades, or direction on rough drafts, and can even occur within a workshop classroom where students are meeting groups and working on their writing within the classroom context.
Conference: Focus Check	This type of response is most useful for early drafts. Without letting the student look at the paper, ask her what the main point of the paper is. After the student has told you what the paper is about, have her show you where in the paper she talks about the main point. More times than not, there will be a difference between what the student thinks the paper is about and what the paper is really about. Having the student check and refocus the paper often leads to a vastly improved draft. How well can a paper be organized or supported when the writer is not writing about what she thinks she's writing about?
Written: broad concerns	As teachers, it's easy to think we need to respond to everything we see in student writing. One option for limiting the amount of feedback we provide students is to only comment on 3-4 broad areas of concern. First, read the entire draft and then decide what 3-4 areas would best support the students' writing development. Focusing on what a writer is trying to accomplish at a specific place in the writing process alleviates the pressure an instructor might feel in having to comment on everything at once. Another option some instructors rely on is to design assignments that focus on teaching 1-2 writing skills and then only respond to those skills.
Written: end letter	One place to provide students feedback on their writing is through an end letter. This space can offer students a holistic view of their writing -- what did you see that was working well? what should they focus on if they are revising? Writing the next assignment? The end letter can also be a place where you note patterns throughout the text.

Written: marginal	Another option to provide student feedback is through marginal comments. Comments directly in the text can provide writers an idea of how a reader experienced their writing -- what moved them when? what questions popped into the reader's mind when. Marginal comments tend to focus more on corrective remarks, facilitative questions that challenge very particular points (or sentences, or vocabulary), and praise for an idea or turn of phrase.
Written: questions	One strategy teachers use to limit overtaking student work or focusing too much on sentence-level issues is to only ask questions. Your questions can reflect any aspect of writing or ideas in the paper, but the goal of asking questions is to place yourself in a more facilitative role instead of a directive-judge role.
Written: editing	One way to make decisions about the type of response to give a particular piece of writing is to determine what stage of the writing process a writer is going through. It does little good, for example, to mark errors of grammar, spelling and punctuation on a rough draft, when a writer plans on make substantial revisions anyway. It is impossible for you as a teacher and reader or your student as a writer to see and attend to everything at once. Knowing where a writer is within the writing process helps to determine what to comment about. For example, very rough drafts often get quite a bit better if the student concentrates on maintaining a consistent focus. Elements involved in focusing a piece of writing also tend to affect organizational, support and transitions. Mechanical correctness is often best attended to after a student has rewritten in response to concerns about unity, development and organization. It is often helpful to convert concerns about error into instruction on editing and proofreading. Why waste time polishing prose you may eventually revise out of your writing?
Digital: Audio	One concern students have when reading teacher feedback is they can't read the tone of comment -- is the teacher mad? did I do anything well in my writing when all the feedback reads so negative? Audio comments seem to function more along the lines of end comments where they reflect student writing more holistically. Audio files can be recorded and sent as a link to students or as an attachment in blackboard. Grademark/turnitin has recently added in an audio comment feature. Unclear if/when Safe Assign will allow audio files.
Digital: color coded	Nancy Mack uses color marking to help visually direct students' attention to feedback. She finds that color coded responses model the revision process more for her students. The color makes a vivid impression on students on what needs attended to in their writing. Mack additionally teaches students how to uses color coding in their peer review workshops to bridge the learning-responding-revising loop.

	Key Highlighted GREEN text is interesting or good. Highlighted YELLOW text needs minor revision. Highlighted PINK text needs major revision. Highlighted GRAY text needs proofreading. **The PURPLE text (shown as bold here) indicates a comment.** 20 out of 20 participation points. (Points encourage students to submit drafts on time.) FIGURE 1. Color key to highlighted text. (Adapted from: http://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1161&context=english)
Peer Review	Peer response can be a valuable part of teaching assessing student writing. Peer response usually means that students meet together in a group and respond to each other's writing. It can also involve just two students or an entire class talking about a particular piece of writing. It can also be used, like the focus check, to help students complete a specific, important part of the writing process. Many teachers use peer groups to help students with proofreading and editing. Some have even created editorial boards in their classrooms that often consist of students who really know language conventions and those that do not who work together to help students in the class proofread and edit their work. Peer response groups can be longstanding over an entire school year or writing project or they can be convened for specific purposes like focus checks, editing and proofreading or looking at rough drafts. While relatively easy to structure and use, peer writing groups are not always so easy to conduct well. Like all new or innovative practices in a classroom, students need to be taught how to use peer groups effectively. Aids like peer response sheets that focus students on to a particular task or modeling activities like the "fishbowl" in which teachers show students how to read and respond to each others' writing is often necessary in order to get peer writing groups to work as well as they can. Peer groups are a good way to use assessment to teach, since class-made rubrics can be used in peer review sessions. When functioning well, peer response can have many positive benefits. They allow students to get real feedback for their writing in a timely fashion and free up some of the teacher's time. They also teach students how to respond to other's writing which in turn allows them to be better responders to their own writing. Students often report that they learned much about their own writing by being in a position to respond to the writing of others. Peer response groups also allow the promotion of a lively, interactive classroom in which students learn by doing, since they are encouraged to work with each other as they learn to write and respond to writing.
Mass/Course Commentary	Managing response load is a concern of many writing teachers. One way teachers might respond is through a mass commentary letter. Teachers read the entire set of papers and then write a letter of feedback to the whole class based on what you read. The letter typically is more in depth and provides a general, yet focused, overview of what teachers would like to see in future assignments. Additionally, mass commentary could be used for focused concerns (freeing teachers up to not comment on them in individual drafts). The instructor identifies the common problems (through skimming the set of papers), and then constructs a handout addressing them, rather than commenting on them in each essay.

Technologies for Response

Technology	How to access	Use	Additional notes
Google Voice	www.google.com/voice	Think of Google Voice as an online answering machine for your e-mail. By giving your students your specific Google voice number, their recorded message goes straight to your email where you can then listen to or read the transcribed message. It can be used as an easy way to incorporate audio responses into your curriculum.	Check out this resource for ideas on how to use Google Voice in the classroom.
Inserting Audio in Google Docs	https://kaizena.com	Kaizena is the new version of Google voice comments. Along with allowing you to add voice comments to Google Docs, Kaizena also allows you to manage, save, and reproduce comments and links to resources on any Google Doc.	Kaizena only works with Google Docs.
Today's Meet and/or Twitter	https://todaysmeet.com	A backchannel is the conversation that goes on alongside the primary activity, presentation, or discussion. Today's Meet helps harness the backchannel and turn it into a platform that can enable new activities and discussions, extend conversations beyond the classroom, and give all students a voice. Embracing the backchannel can turn it from distraction to engagement. Participants can learn from each other and share their insights, improving participation and deepening learning. TodaysMeet enables instant formative assessment, feedback, and much more.	Today's Meet (private), Twitter (public), both- archival potential, find more information about Twitter as a backchannel tool here and on Edutopia.
Eli Review	http://elireview.com/development/	While ELI Review's peer review & feedback technology requires a paid subscription, they also provide a ton of useful resources to help teachers understand feedback and revision, design effective peer review sessions, and teach their students revision strategies.	
ECUs OWL and other resources	http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/writing/uwc/	Remember, you are not the only one who can give feedback--the writing center is here to help. Not only does the UWC provide different face-to-face locations, but they also provide online appointments for DE sections (asynchronous and synchronous). There are also a plethora of online resources for different stages of the writing process.	
Grammar Girl and other Podcasts	Grammar Girl http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar	Grammar Girl is a friendly guide to the world of grammar, punctuation, usage, and fun developments in language. Many of the podcasts are accompanied by visuals and mnemonics that help explain and help listeners remember rules in grammar and mechanics.	UW Madison WC Podcast also has videos to go with podcasts, or you could have students create podcasts on academic writing topics…