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Tuning in Vs. Taking Over: Teacher Feedback on Student Writing

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Abstract

English teachers spend hours giving feedback on student writing only for it to be overlooked or unused by students. As such, many educators find they spend more time offering feedback than students do on writing their own assignments which can be both frustrating and a waste of valuable time. This paper tries to better understand best practices when navigating the delicate balance of “tuning in” versus “taking over” student writing via teacher feedback. It aims to open up a discussion on literature on the processes of giving feedback on writing tasks and offers data collected from both teachers and students around their opinions of high-quality feedback and the most effective ways they have given and received feedback. Through survey and interview data, this paper argues that the importance of timely, specific, and constructive, yet positive feedback is crucial. By honing our own teaching practice, we can empower students to have more agency over their own writing revision to help them develop pieces that they feel are genuinely their own.

Keywords: writing, quality feedback, literacy, agency