

## **A Manifesto on Written Feedback**

### **by the CSU Writing Center Tutors and Students of Advanced Exposition**

In collaboration with Professor Nancy Sommers on her recent visit to CSU, the CSU Writing Center Tutors and the Students of Advanced Exposition thoughtfully and respectfully submit the following opinions and objectives to CSU faculty regarding the methods for offering feedback on writing assignments.

- 1) We would like your comments to be written to us – students, people -- not to the paper. We would like you to engage us through dialogue, not through commands. We ask that you not use your comments to reinforce the hierarchy between professors and students. Instead, use comments to create a relationship with us—reader to writer—and show us that you have read our papers and care about our development as writers and thinkers.
- 2) We would like your comments to be specific and not generic. Point out what we've accomplished and provide specific strategies for *how* we can improve as writers. We ask that you assume that we want to become stronger writers and to learn from your comments.
- 3) We would like your comments to bolster our agency as writers and to deepen our thinking. We feel censored when you cross out our sentences or shut down our arguments by writing "wrong" in the margin.
- 4) We would like your comments to help us notice themes and patterns in our writing, rather than point out random or arbitrary mistakes. We learn how to become better writers when you take the time to see patterns within and across our drafts.
- 5) We would like you to distribute rubrics with the assignment rather than at the end of the writing process. You help us improve as writers when you discuss the rubric in class, for then the rubric informs our writing process, and we can learn from it. If your rubric is formulaic and covers too many elements, it does not help us as much, for it seems to exist for you to justify your grades.