

# Summary Content Active Readers, Active Writers in Dialogue

York College Writing Fellows, Writing Across the Curriculum



## What is Summary Content?

Summary response to writing promotes an active revision process by highlighting a particular reader's understanding in relation to a writer's intent. Below are suggestions as to how and why to implement this process in three settings: the professor's end comments to student writing, the student's response to these comments on his/her work, and between students in peer writing workshops.

### How can professors use Summary Content?

#### Professor's End Comment

First paragraph: Professor's summary of what he/she has understood in a student's paper with such comments as:

"This is what I see this paper doing..."

"This is what I understand your thesis to be..."

Second paragraph: A deeper analysis with some suggestions for revision using the terms "this paper" or "your second paragraph" rather than "you"

#### Why?

- Writing as a process through conversational exchange
- Using "I" rather than "you" statements
- Being specific, grounded in the student's text

### How can students use Summary Content?

#### Student's Response to Professor

Students write summaries of what they understand the professor to mean in the end comment.

#### Why?

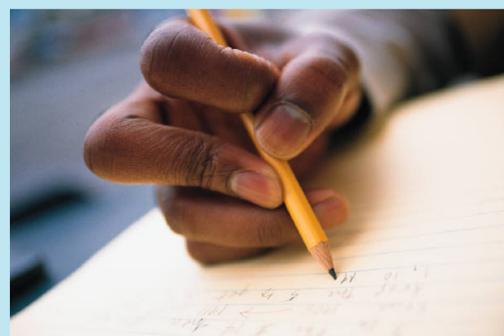
- Student as an active participant in a dialog
- Comparing student's understanding and professor's intent
- Treating professor's end comment as a text itself worthy of interpretation

#### Peer Writing Workshop

Students read each other's papers and write summaries of what they've understood their peer to mean.

#### Why?

- Enacting face-to-face exchange between writer and reader
- Highlighting varied readers' understandings
- Bringing active reading into revision



### But won't this be time consuming?

The following strategies incorporate Summary Content comments into a time-constrained schedule:

- Focusing comments on the content in students' papers
- Limiting comments to 1-2 issues in 2-3 places
- Replacing a longer end comment with a few marginal comments and a brief summary of student's meaning
- Responding more extensively in the beginning of the semester
- Writing detailed comments for rotating groups of students

For more ideas about how to support students' writing process, contact the Writing Fellows:

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