

Hierarchy of Rhetorical Concerns: Prioritizing Feedback

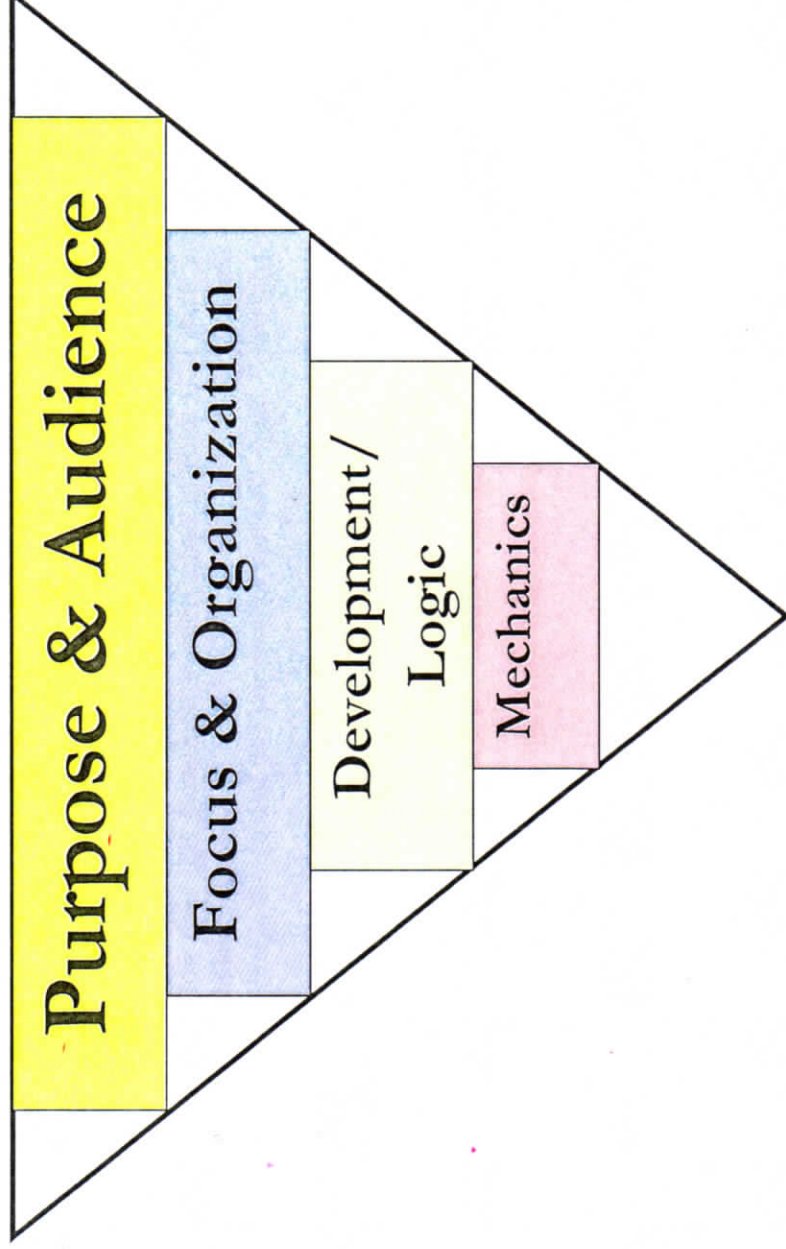
Feedback is useful information about the effects of an action in light of a goal ~Grant Wiggins¹ ([blog link](#))

What is the Hierarchy of Rhetorical Concerns?

A tool by which one can prioritize different aspects of a writing. This tool helps to examine the quality of a piece of writing by prioritizing the types of feedback for revision. This hierarchy was created after a meta-analysis writing study that examined aspects of writing feedback that would be most beneficial to students and teachers.

Why is this helpful for students and teachers?

Feedback can be overwhelming for both students and teachers. The hierarchy helps to prioritize feedback for students and teachers. This also helps students to attain the language necessary when discussing writing and revision.



¹ <https://grantwiggins.wordpress.com/2014/04/15/what-feedback-is-and-isnt/>

Tips for Helping Students

<i>Rhetorical Aspect</i>	<i>Questions for reflection & conferencing</i>	<i>Ideas for teachers when conferencing</i>
1) Purpose & Audience	What is this writing piece trying to achieve? What is the goal of this writing/paper/essay? Where do I think your essay most clearly meets this goal?	Ask students to articulate purpose by choosing an action verb that best describes what they want to achieve. I want my audience to _____ I want to _____ my audience... (i.e. I want my audience to believe global warming is a real concern/ I want to inform my audience of the dangers of global warming)
	Who is my audience? What are my audience's values, belief systems, interests? If _____ were your audience, how would you make changes to meet their needs?	Ask students or provide students with an audience to focus on when they write (i.e. board members, community, elementary students etc.) Provide students with models and analyze how the models are addressing audience
2) Focus & Organization	How does this paragraph/section relate to your thesis/purpose? What is the goal of this paragraph/section? -how does it relate to/support your thesis/purpose?	Ask students to reread their paper and summarize it in 1 sentence. Cross reference that with the purpose of the paper- does it align? Then, ask students if there are any statements in the essay that matches the 1 sentence summary. If not, ask them to identify a place where the summary statement could fit into the writing. If paper is very unfocused- ask students to write a summary sentence of every paragraph/section. Then examine the sentences for repeated ideas, patterns, unrelated ideas etc.
	Can you explain why you arranged/ordered your writing/essay this way? Where do you think the paper flows well? Where does it get off track? How should I organize my ideas to best meet the expectations of your purpose &/or audience?	Outline the essay by asking students to write down short bullets about each paragraph of the essay to visualize how it is organized. Then ask students to explain organization (does this make sense?) Have students explain the relationships among ideas in the outline-then have them look at how to signal that relationship (ie transitions words/phrases)

3)Development /Logic	What else could you say about ____? This idea or claim could use more support. What evidence could you use to back it up? What else will your audience want to know about? This idea is unclear; can you explain it more? Can you explain your thinking more fully on ____? I'm having trouble following along here-could you tell me more about it?	Ask students to identify claims made in the essay. For those claims-what evidence is used to support them. If no evidence-discuss possible pieces of evidence in the text. Reverse the above- list evidence then explain what ideas or claim the evidence will be used to support it. If students are unsure why they chose the evidence, then ask them to explain what idea/claim it would support. Then discuss whether or not that idea/claim or evidence fits within the essay.
4)Mechanics	SENTENCE-LEVEL CONCERNS: Are sentences clear? Is parallelism used? Are transitions used to connect ideas? Are sentences concise? I'm having trouble following the logic here. Can you tell me more about it? These two ideas don't seem to be connected. Can you explain the connection? This sentence is somewhat wordy. How can you make it more concise? WORD-LEVEL CONCERNS: Is verb tense consistent? Do subjects and verbs agree? Pronouns with antecedents? Is diction appropriate? Do you see where you've shifted tense here? Have the student read the sentence aloud to see if he/she "hears" the inappropriate syntax.	Choose model sentences from the text you are studying. Ask students to explain the grammar focus. Then explain why the author would use this grammatical format. Model Sentences: <u>It might seem</u> like a good thing that I was kicked out. <u>It might seem</u> as if this exile expedited the leave I was seeking. What grammar concept is being used? Two complex sentences that begin with the same wording/phrase Why does the author do this? These two sentences create a viewpoint that they refer back to later.

Options for Implementation

- Group students by these issues and create a writing station rotation. Students would use the reflection questions to peer review and/or work on their own.
- Conference with students using the questions or teacher talk
- Use the hierarchy to write only 2 comments for revision
- Doc Camera modeling the categories

RUSD Rubric (with CCSS)

	6 Superior Response	5 Strong Response	4 Proficient Response	3 Limited Response	2 Inadequate Response	1 Fundamentally Flawed Response
Response to the topic W1(a-e)	Addresses the topic clearly and responds effectively to all aspects of the task.	Addresses the topic clearly, but may respond to some aspects of the task more effectively than others.	Addresses the topic, but may not respond to all parts of the task thoroughly.	Misunderstands or does not respond to all parts of the task.	Indicates confusion about the topic or neglects important aspects of the task.	Fails to respond meaningfully to the task.
Understanding and use of passage W1(a,b)	Demonstrates a thorough critical understanding of the readings in developing an insightful response.	Demonstrates a sound critical understanding of the assigned readings in developing a well reasoned response.	Demonstrates a generally accurate understanding of the assigned readings in developing a reasonable response.	Demonstrates a limited understanding of the readings, or makes poor use of it in developing a weak response.	Demonstrates very poor understanding of the main points of the assigned readings, does not use the readings appropriately in developing a response, or may not use the readings at all.	Demonstrates little or no understanding of the assigned readings or does not use them in developing a response.
Quality and clarity of thought W1(b,c)	Explores the issues thoughtfully and in depth.	Shows some depth and complexity of thought.	Provides basic analysis, but may treat the topic repetitively.	Lacks focus, sometimes fails to communicate ideas, or has weak analysis.	Lacks focus and coherence, and often fails to communicate its ideas.	Is unfocused, illogical, or incoherent.
Organization, development, and support W1(c,e)	Is coherently organized and developed, with ideas supported by apt reasons and well-chosen examples.	Is well organized and developed, with ideas supported by appropriate reasons and examples.	Is adequately organized and developed, generally supporting ideas with reasons and examples.	Is poorly organized and developed, presenting generalizations without adequate support, or presenting details without generalizations.	Has very weak organization, development, and support.	Is disorganized and undeveloped, providing little or no relevant support.
Syntax and command of language W1(c,d), L3	Has an effective, fluent style marked by sentence variety and a clear command of language.	Displays some sentence variety and facility in the use of language.	Demonstrates adequate use of sentence structure and language.	Demonstrates limited control of sentence structure and language.	Demonstrates inadequate control of sentences structure and language.	Lacks basic control of sentence structure and language.
Grammar, usage, and mechanics details W1(d), L1, L2	Is generally free from errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.	May have a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.	May have some errors, but generally demonstrates control of grammar, usage, and mechanics.	Has an accumulation of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that sometimes interfere with meaning.	Has numerous errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that frequently interfere with meaning.	Has serious and persistent errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that severely interfere with meaning.