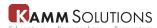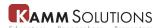# Guidelines and Resources for Providing Feedback

Feedback is information about how one is doing in an effort to meet a goal. It is not an evaluation or advice; rather, effective feedback is a dialogue, not a one-way communication. Feedback occurs in day-to-day encounters with the intent of reducing the gap between where a person is currently performing and where that person is striving to perform.

Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools

True **feedback** has the following **specific characteristics**:
● **Goal-Referenced**
● **Actionable**
● **User-Friendly**
● **Ongoing**
● **Consistent**
	● *Goal-Referenced*: Information is feedback if it is **directly related to a goal (standard, objective)**. If a learner has no goal in mind when attempting a task, then feedback is futile.
	  ○ In school, students may be confused about the goal for their work or for a lesson, so teachers need to be clear from the start with rubrics, opportunities for student to generate criteria, and specific reminders throughout the learning process about what the goal of the task is.
	  ○ When the goal is clear, students can reflect on their progress and elicit feedback about their work from the teacher and from other students.
	● *Actionable*: Feedback is actionable when it is **concrete and non-judgmental.**
	  ○ A statement such as "Well done!" or "You get an A!" provides no information about what was actually done well or what merited such a grade. There is nothing offered on which a student can take action.
	  ○ **Providing specific information** on which students can take immediate action makes the feedback purposeful and increases learning.
	● *User-Friendly*: Feedback needs to be **clear and substantiated**. Even if it is data based and goal related, it is not helpful if the person receiving the feedback does not understand it.
	  ○ Feedback riddled with technical terms, unfamiliar acronyms, etc. will not be clear to a novice. It is important to use familiar terms and ideas in giving feedback.
		[What is Feedback?](#)
		
		[Seven Keys to Effective Feedback](#)
		
		[Twenty Ways to Provide Effective Feedback](#)
		
		[Effective Feedback in the Classroom](#) (https://cirt.gcu.edu/teaching3/tips/effectivefeed)

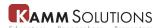| Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools

	○ Too much feedback is likewise counterproductive. Focusing on one or two details helps those receiving the feedback to avoid feeling overwhelmed with information overload.
	○ User-friendly feedback is best when the person giving the feedback points out change that will provide immediate improvement.
	● *Timely:* **The sooner** that we can receive or give feedback, **the better.**
	  ○ There are instances where immediate feedback is not helpful and certainly doesn't need to be public (e.g., at the very end of a class presentation).
	  ○ Teachers need to strive to find ways to provide more timely feedback instead of the days, weeks, or even month long lag with slow turnaround on assignments, projects, and performances.
	  ○ Peer-review feedback is also a helpful strategy, but students need to be guided to provide mature and thoughtful feedback.
	● *Ongoing:* Feedback that is ongoing allows students the time and space to actually **make the changes necessary** to reach their goal.
	  ○ If students receive feedback but never have the opportunity to improve their performance, then the feedback is futile.
	  ○ Teachers need to teach their students that making mistakes is inevitable, and learning from their mistakes is vital. This is the way students improve their work.
	● *Consistent:* Feedback that is consistent not only needs to be data-based but also **accurate and trustworthy**.
	  ○ Teachers need to agree about what constitutes high-quality work. They should discuss the goals of the assignment with one another as well as with students.
	  ○ Teachers should have a rubric for each project and collaboratively review student work.	

Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools
School cultures must be conducive to a healthy exchange of feedback.	• Most teachers agree that feedback is not always easy to graciously receive. To make that process easier, it is important that a **school culture** is 　○ Committed to **growth** and improved performance, 　○ Committed to the **process** and value of feedback, 　○ Fosters a **feeling of safety** amongst the teachers and staff. 　○ Anchored in **relational trust**. • **Relational trust** is at the heart of a positive, productive school culture. Relational trust is also essential for feedback to be well received and thoughtfully provided. In schools, educators can engage in the following practices to establish a positive, trusting culture: 　○ Develop a **vision** of what trust looks like, especially respect, communication, and appreciation. 　○ Look at organizational setbacks as temporary and **focus on solutions** and next steps — develop language that is proactive and not blame centered. 　○ Be **honest** about errors and mistakes as a leader — apologize and focus on solutions and next steps. 　○ **Celebrate** new learning. 　○ Build **personal relationships** with colleagues, students, and members of the community while setting goals and doing the important work of educating students together. 　○ **Listen** to the comments and concerns of colleagues. People who feel they are being listened to begin to shift the culture. 　○ Emphasize **cooperation and sharing** versus competition and favoritism. 　○ **Develop the capacity** of colleagues by providing opportunities for them to be strategically involved with the work of school/district improvement. 　○ Trust colleagues to make decisions and give them **a voice in issues** of consequence.	A Positive Learning Culture is the Foundation for Effective Feedback How Can I Support Effective Peer Feedback?

Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools
	o Structure opportunities for **interpersonal interaction** so that teachers build relationships around meaningful work. ● A healthy school culture conducive to feedback recognizes that it is **OK to make mistakes** and views them as not only temporary setbacks, but also a vital part of the learning process; however, failure is not an option. Individuals are supported and encouraged to work until they meet their goals. ● There also should exist a **feeling of safety** within the school so that admittance to not understanding a concept is welcomed and rewarded with helpful feedback. ● Specifically regarding the students, the focus in a positive feedback-rich school culture is **student learning** and not assigning grades.	
Formative learning occurs when feedback is thoughtful and focused on learning goals.	● When **well constructed and clearly delivered**, feedback improves student achievement dramatically. Conversely, when it is empty, it is not only confusing for students but can also affect them negatively. ● **Formative feedback** requires that students are involved in the assessment of their own learning and they use that information to adjust their learning practices. This requires feedback be provided throughout the learning cycle rather than at the end of it. ● Effective formative feedback should be **simple, specific, descriptive, and focused on the assigned task**. ● Formative feedback should be provided not only about the final **product**, but also about the **process** students used to accomplish the task or create the product as well as the **progress** they made during the course of the learning. ● Effective feedback that helps students better understand what teachers want	[Vigotsky's Zone of Proximal Development](#) [John Hattie on Feedback in Mathematics](#) [John Hattie Interview: "Think of Feedback That is Received, Not Given"](#)

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Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools
	them to understand centers on three questions: ○ **Where am I going?** Students need to understand what their learning goals are and what the criteria for meeting those goals actually look like. Otherwise, any feedback they receive is confusing, and possibly misleading, if their understanding of the goal is muddled. ○ **How am I doing?** Feedback about progress is the focus of this question. It requires a consideration of a student's past and present performance paired with clear communication so that the student understands specifically where he or she is currently on a learning continuum toward meeting an established goal. ○ **Where to next?** Feedback that answers this question focuses on selecting the next appropriate challenge to meet in the learning process; asks students to self-regulate, apply different strategies in their efforts toward the goal, and gain a deeper understanding of the content; and provides more information about what students do and do not understand. ● The feedback that teachers provide to students to help them learn should be shaped by the individual students' **"zone of proximal development"** (ZPD) as defined by Vigotsky. Similar to scaffolding, the ZPD is defined as the place between what a student can do on his or her own and what a student needs help to complete. It is **what a student can do _with_ help** so that the student can eventually **perform independently**. ● Teachers need to be aware of the types of feedback they provide students. Some types have proven effective, while others have not. The major types of feedback can be categorized by the following descriptors: ○ **Self** "feedback" is directed at the student specifically (i.e. "You are an	[5 Research-based Tips for Providing Students with Meaningful Feedback](#)

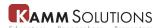| Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools
	excellent student!" "Good job!") This is not so much feedback as praise that directs attention towards the student and away from what the student actually accomplished or still needs to work on. It serves a purpose as a comfort and support to students, but it rarely directly affects achievement and learning because it contains no task-related information. ○ **Task or product** feedback is most effective when it is focused on information about how well students learned new information or a new skill. Sometimes this type of feedback takes the form of a specific task a student can do to improve performance on a specific assignment. It often does not have applicability outside of this task. Frequently, this type of feedback is provided to the whole group, and while many students may think it does not apply to them, ○ **Process** feedback focuses on the processes or practices students used in order to complete a task. This type of feedback helps students learn more deeply as they are better able to detect their own errors, re-evaluate their approach, seek out better research and information, and improve their strategies to complete the task. Often process feedback has wider applicability outside of a specific task or assignment. ○ **Self-regulatory** feedback refers to students' ability to monitor their own learning process. They become more confident in their abilities to perform and seek out feedback in order to reduce the gap between how they are performing and their own performance goals. Self-regulatory feedback often involves a dialogue between teachers and students where students are engaged actively in the conversation determining how they can improve their product.	

Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools
	- Teachers need to remember that providing **timely feedback** is a key part of students' learning experiences. For example, research essays are excellent learning tools in all content areas when feedback is timely and **a central part of the drafting process.** - Feedback may be most helpful in the learning process when it addresses students' **faulty interpretations** of material and misconceptions. - Teachers need to **allow students time to improve their work** after they have received feedback. Otherwise, there is little purpose in taking the time to provide feedback, and limited learning that occurs. - Note that the **assignment of grades accompanying feedback discourages students from actually applying the information** in the feedback to their work. When students see that something is graded, even if it is accompanied by feedback, they are less likely to apply that feedback to their work to improve it. Not assigning grades until student work is at its best ensures that students will actually make improvements and learn from the feedback. - Students who have participated in **formative learning and who have received effective feedback can respond to the following questions**: - What are you learning? How will you know when you have learned it? - What have you learned about your next steps for learning from the feedback provided by your teacher and your peers? - What is your learning goal? Why have you selected this goal? - What action steps will you take to achieve this goal? - What help will you need, and where will you find this help? - How will you know if you are successful? - How will you celebrate the accomplishment of your goal?	

Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools
Student-to-student feedback, a component of formative learning, is useful for the students who are both receiving and providing feedback.	● In order for peer feedback to be successful and positive, there must exist within a classroom the same safety and acceptance of mistakes and questions as is described in the school culture section above. Teachers should be **willing to model** the same behaviors they ask students to employ and, therefore, should be willing and ready to admit to their own mistakes. This will help build a feedback-friendly classroom: 　○ Students should never feel embarrassed by their own efforts or criticized by their peers. 　○ Students should see their peers as critical friends who both challenge and encourage them to help them be more successful. ● Students need to be trained in using **rubrics as guidelines**. In doing so, they will learn how to avoid immature observations or inflated praise. ● Students need to learn to provide **actionable feedback that** is free of judgment and learning goal-oriented. Having a posted and visible list of feedback sentence starters can help students learn to provide actionable feedback: 　○ You have done _____ really well. (Provide evidence). 　○ I don't understand _____. Try _____ to make it clearer. 　○ You did a great job with _____, however, you may want to consider including _____. ● A few **guidelines for peer-feedback** should be implemented from the start of the student-to-student feedback process: 　○ Respect others' work. 　○ Identify what the student did well. 　○ Consider the learning goal and the criteria for success (as laid out in the rubric) when making suggestions for improvement. 　○ Word all suggestions positively.	Teaching Students to Use Rubrics Introducing Rubrics to Students Strategies to Enhance Peer Feedback The Power of Peer Feedback Student Centered Assessment/ Peer Assessment Teaching Feedback Changes How High School Students Talk to Each Other About Writing

Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools
Feedback between educators and from students provides valuable information that teachers can utilize to improve their instruction.	● Feedback itself is not necessarily an effective reinforcer of change, even if it is sound, because it can be accepted or just as easily dismissed. **How it is delivered is paramount to its acceptance**: 　○ Feedback will be appreciated when **the person receiving it trusts the person giving it** and sees **the giver as credible** and **well intentioned.** 　○ The person providing the feedback should do so with the best intentions, as well as, be **motivated by a sincere desire to support and mentor the person they are evaluating**. 　○ The **mindset** of a person also affects the acceptance of feedback: 　　● The person with a **fixed mindset** often struggles with feedback because he or she sees intelligence and ability as fixed and believes that no amount of effort will change one's level of intelligence or talent. 　　● A person with a **growth mindset** accepts feedback, recognizing that hard work enhances ability. ● Teachers generally **welcome feedback from peers with similar content experience**. Making certain that there is time in the school day for teachers to observe each other in action is a critical part of the feedback process and should be a regular part of a healthy feedback-friendly culture. ● Newer teachers will be receptive to feedback from more experienced teachers and supervising teachers when they are **treated as colleagues and equals**. ● **Soliciting feedback from students** is a sound practice as it yields more learning. If a teacher's goal is for students to understand how to add and subtract integers, then soliciting their feedback in terms of what they do and do not understand is critical information that will help the teacher adjust how and what is taught. This needs to be a consistent practice with all new concepts.	Teaching Strategies: The Essentials of Giving Feedback The Best Resources for Learning How to Best Give Feedback to Students What Are Rubrics and Why Are They Important? Survey Monkey: Student, Parent, and Teacher Survey Templates Student Satisfaction Survey Template Muddiest Point The Minute Paper Managing

Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools

	- Teachers need to **keep track of what specific concepts individual students struggle with** so that they can inform their own practice and better guide students to meeting the learning goals.
	- **Muddiest point** and/or **minute papers** ask students to identify what they gleaned from the lesson and/or what they still don't understand. Assuming that the teacher's goal is for students to apply the skills and understand the concepts presented in class, these strategies will provide timely feedback about how well students understood.
	- **Student conferences** provide excellent opportunities for teachers to solicit and listen to student feedback. Equally important, they also allow students to evaluate their own learning.
	- The format of student conferences should be **student-centered**, rather than the teachers doing all the talking. They can be short, periodic visits between teacher and student or lengthier project-focused meetings where students discuss their progress on a current assignment. Student-centered conferences work best if teachers
	    ○ Provide students with the student-centered **conference format ahead** of time, so students can prepare their own self-evaluation.
	    ○ Listen, answer questions, offer suggestions to guide communication, but ultimately let the students do most of the talking.
	- **Student satisfaction surveys** also provide teachers with valuable information.
	    ○ Teachers might consider surveying students more regularly in order to find out what is and isn't working in terms of students meeting their learning goals and teachers meeting their teaching goals.
	    ○ The questions on such surveys should be thoughtful and directly related to teaching and learning goals.
		Mindsets: An Approach to Effective Feedback
		
		Measures of Effective Teaching: Student Feedback

Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools

There are specific strategies to follow when **a supervising teacher or principal** provides performance feedback to teachers.	● Remember that establishing a **culture of trust** within a school will significantly improve the receptiveness of the teachers to feedback.
	● Prior to a teaching observation elicit openness and receptiveness from the teacher being observed by **asking a question** such as, "What would you like me to watch for during your lesson?" This exchange will also provide a statement of goals from the teacher that will yield more focused feedback.
	● Make certain that your **feedback is actionable** (non-judgmental and concrete). This is the difference between "Several of your students were bored" and "Eight of the twenty-five students displayed behaviors of disengagement."
	● There are a few steps to keep in mind when providing feedback to a teacher:
	  ○ **Praise:** Always praise the teacher specifically and sincerely for what he or she has accomplished, be it obvious care and nurturing for students, professionalism in difficult situations, constant efforts to follow up with struggling students, or thoughtful questioning techniques or creative assignments. Find something meaningful that merits sincere praise.
	  ○ **Probe:** Don't just assume you have all the information. Ask teachers about their experience with a certain topic, or what their motivation was behind a certain teaching strategy or practice.
	  ○ **Identify:** Focus on key areas for growth, and create an action plan that focuses on a goal.
	  ○ **Practice:** Invite the teacher to practice the strategies involved in the action plan. Suggest that the teacher may want to solicit feedback from students or other peers as they observe the improved practices.
	  ○ **Follow up:** Plan for a time to revisit and observe and discuss the teacher's progress.
		TED Talk- Bill Gates: "Teachers Need Real Feedback"
		
		Giving Feedback
		
		Survey Monkey: Student, Parent, and Teacher Survey Templates
		
		Guidance for Principals: Providing Feedback to Teachers
		
		Connected Principals: Seven Steps to Effective Feedback

Effective Feedback Guidelines	Additional Practices and Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools
Staff to principal feedback is as important as any other type of feedback that occurs on a feedback-rich campus.	- Staff to principal feedback can sometimes be tricky, as teachers do not want to jeopardize receiving promotions or instigate other possible backlash from a grudge-holding principal if they offer some unsolicited feedback. - If a school has worked to establish a safe and trusting culture that is receptive to feedback and improving performance, **the principal should be leading the effort to solicit honest and sincere feedback from the staff and teachers.** - Feedback to the principal can be conducted through surveys, or during regular staff meetings or individual reviews where teachers can anonymously or directly provide sincere and meaningful feedback. - Principals will want to **model taking the feedback to heart** as they clearly and transparently work to improve their practices as leaders of the school. The modeling will inspire others to work on continuous improvement as well.	[Three Constructive Ways to Give Feedback to Your Boss](#) [How to Give Your Boss Feedback](#)

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