

Guidelines and Resources for Providing Feedback

Feedback is information about how well one is approaching a desired goal or objective. Feedback is not an evaluation or a one-way communication from administrator to teacher or teacher to student; rather, effective feedback is a dialogue. The content of this interactive literature review includes the ideas of many thought leaders on how to effectively engage in the art of feedback within a school.

A Culture of Trust Is Essential When Providing Feedback		
Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
<p><i>School cultures must be conducive to a healthy exchange of feedback.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most teachers agree that feedback is not always easy to graciously receive. To make that process easier, it is important that a school culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commits to a growth mindset and improved performance, ○ Embraces the process and value of feedback, ○ Fosters a feeling of safety amongst the teachers and staff. ○ Anchors 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. ○ Structure opportunities for interpersonal interaction so that teachers build relationships around meaningful work. 	<p>A Positive Learning Culture is the Foundation for Effective Feedback</p> <p>What Makes a Good School Culture? Harvard Graduate School of Education</p> <p>Creating a Positive Feedback Culture</p> <p>Creating an effective #feedback culture in schools</p>

A Culture of Trust Is Essential When Providing Feedback

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 should also 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. 	

Effective and Authentic Feedback Has Specific Qualities

Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
<p>Effective feedback is <i>goal-reference, actionable, user-friendly, timely, ongoing, & consistent.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 students 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. ○ 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 in front of the whole group). ○ Teachers need to strive to find ways to provide more timely feedback instead of the day, week, or even month-long lag on the turnaround for a student generated product. ○ 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If students receive feedback but never have the opportunity to improve their performance, then the 	<p>What is feedback?</p> <p>Seven Keys to Effective Feedback</p> <p>Twenty Ways to Provide Effective Feedback</p> <p>Effective Feedback in the Classroom</p> <p>Growing Skilled Peer Reviewers</p>

Effective and Authentic Feedback Has Specific Qualities

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	<p>feedback is futile.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. 	

Feedback is an Important Part of the Formative Process

Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
<p><i>Formative learning occurs when feedback is thoughtful and focused on learning goals.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Well-constructed and clearly-delivered feedback improves student achievement dramatically. Conversely, when feedback is empty, it is not only confusing for students but can also affect their performance 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 to be provided <i>throughout</i> the learning cycle rather than only at the end of it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In other words, 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. ○ Likewise, effective formative feedback should be simple, specific, descriptive, and focused on the assigned task. ● Effective feedback that helps students better understand what teachers want them to understand centers on three questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 may be confusing, and possibly misleading, especially 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 currently is on a learning continuum toward meeting an established goal. ○ Where to next? Feedback that answers this question focuses on selecting the next appropriate challenge for students 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 student’s “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 <i>with</i> help so that the student can eventually perform independently. 	<p>John Hattie Interview: “Think of Feedback That is Received, Not Given”</p> <p>Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding</p> <p>John Hattie on Feedback in Mathematics (video)</p>

Feedback Is Effective Between Teacher and Student When It Is Thoughtfully Implemented

Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
<p><i>Teachers need to be aware of the types of feedback they provide students and the timeliness with which they do so, as both can be effective or ineffective depending on what and when feedback is shared.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The most common types of feedback can be categorized by the following descriptors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self “feedback” is directed at the student specifically (i.e. “You are an 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. ● 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. 	<p>5 Research-based Tips for Providing Students with Meaningful Feedback</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback may be most helpful in the learning process when it addresses students' faulty interpretations of material and misconceptions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using a quick check, such as a Kahoot game, that reviews recent concepts taught helps teachers recognize students' misunderstandings about concepts and correct them in a timely manner. ● 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 occurs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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? 	

Feedback Is Effective Amongst Students When It Is Thoughtfully Implemented

Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
<p>Student-to-student feedback, a component of formative learning, is useful for the students who are both receiving and providing feedback.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. 	<p>Teaching Students to Use Rubrics</p> <p>Introducing Rubrics to Students</p> <p>The Power of Peer Feedback</p> <p>Student Centered Assessment/ Peer Assessment</p> <p>Teaching Feedback Changes How High School Students Talk to Each Other About Writing</p>

Feedback between educators and from students provides valuable information to improve instruction

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<p><i>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 feedback is delivered is paramount to its acceptance.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A person with a growth mindset accepts feedback, recognizing that hard work enhances ability. ○ 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. ● When teachers provide feedback to one another, there are a few concepts to keep in mind: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. ○ Likewise, 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. ● 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. ● For older students, 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. 	<p>Teaching Strategies: The Essentials of Giving Feedback</p> <p>Survey Monkey: Student, Parent, and Teacher Survey Templates</p> <p>Muddiest Point</p> <p>The Minute Paper</p> <p>How Do Rubrics Help?</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. 	

Feedback Amongst the Adults on a Campus Is an Important Tool for Professional Growth

Main Ideas	Additional Information	Resources
<p><i>There are specific strategies to follow when a supervising teacher or principal provides performance feedback to teachers. Likewise, staff to principal feedback is as important as any other type of feedback that occurs on a feedback-rich campus.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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, observe, and discuss the teacher’s progress. ● Staff to principal feedback can sometimes be tricky, as teachers do not want to jeopardize receiving promotions or instigate possible backlash from a grudge-holding principal if they offer 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 	<p>TED Talk- Bill Gates: "Teachers Need Real Feedback"</p> <p>Guidance for Principals: Providing Feedback to Teachers</p> <p>Connected Principals: Seven Steps to Effective Feedback</p> <p>What Teachers Want You To Know: A Note to School Administrators</p> <p>How to Give Your Boss Feedback</p>

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