

Classroom Best Practices: Providing Feedback to Students in the Classroom

ANTICIPATORY SET:

1. What is feedback?
2. Who should give feedback in the classroom?
3. Are there any guidelines for providing effective feedback?

OVERVIEW:

Wikipedia defines feedback as, "A process of sharing observations, concerns and suggestions between persons or divisions of the organization with an intention of improving both personal and organizational performance."

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Text_of_the_GNU_Free_Documentation_License). Providing feedback to learners is a highly generalizable strategy that can be applied in any learning situation. In the classroom, both teachers and fellow students can provide feedback on demonstrations of learning.

By definition, the intent of feedback is to improve performance. The **way** in which students receive feedback from others, however, is critical to positively impacting student learning and improving performance. Research indicates a wide-range of results on the general effects of feedback; certain strategies produce better results than others. Some types of feedback can produce negative results. It is important, therefore, for teachers to understand and use the most effective, research-based strategies when providing feedback to students.

GUIDELINES FOR USE:

General guidelines for providing feedback to improve student learning include:

1. Feedback should be corrective.

This means that feedback should provide students with an explanation of what they are doing incorrectly **and** correctly. According to research, the **least** effective strategy for providing students feedback in a testing situation is to mark student responses to questions as correct or incorrect. Using this strategy may actually result in an overall drop in student performance. Effective strategies include (1) providing students with the correct answer, (2) asking students to keep working on a task until they succeed, and (3) providing students with an explanation as to what is accurate and inaccurate about their responses. According to research, strategies 2 and 3 are the most effective with documented increases of 20% in student performance.

2. Feedback should be timely.

This means that feedback should be given **immediately** after a formal demonstration of learning. The longer a teacher waits to give feedback, the less improvement there is in student achievement. Teachers should not be too eager to give feedback, though. Research shows that giving feedback after each item on a test is less effective than giving feedback immediately after the entire test is complete. Best practice indicates that the most effective time to give a test is one day after a learning situation. Feedback should be provided as soon as possible after the test is complete.

3. Feedback should be criterion-referenced.

This means that feedback should reference a specific knowledge or skill level. Criterion-referenced feedback tells students how they perform in relation to an established set of knowledge or skills. By contrast, norm-referenced feedback tells students how they perform in comparison to other students. One of the best tools a teacher can use to provide students with criterion-referenced feedback is a rubric. Effective rubrics provide students with very concise information about their performance relative to an established range of standards for each item being assessed. An example rubric, and rubric on developing rubrics, is included in the Examples section.

INVOLVING STUDENTS IN THE FEEDBACK PROCESS:

Involving students in the feedback process can take various forms. Research indicates that students can effectively self-monitor their own progress. Practical examples of student self-monitoring include having students keep track of their progress during learning or self-evaluate their performance. Student-led feedback can also produce desirable results. While teachers must formally evaluate student work, students can effectively peer evaluate projects using the same specifically-defined criteria employed by teachers during grading. Peer-evaluation reinforces learning and provides students with a variety of perspectives on work during the feedback process. Examples of peer-evaluation include having students edit rough drafts of work in progress and participate in formal critiques of visual work or presentations.

Example Rubric:

Calendar Rubric

Student: _____



	(Excellent) 5	(Good) 3	(Poor) 1	Score
Integration of Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar is proportionally set to size requirements. <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar covers all targeted learning objectives: Use of tabs (evenly aligned columns of information), proportional size boxes, legible letters and numbering, lines that connect at point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar is set somewhat proportional to size requirements. <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar covers a large amount of targeted learning objectives: Use of tabs (evenly aligned columns of information), proportional size boxes, legible letters and numbering, lines that connect at point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar is not set proportionally to size requirements. <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar covers less than half the amount of targeted learning objectives: Use of tabs (evenly aligned columns of information), proportional size boxes, legible letters and numbering, lines that connect at point. 	(Section I = 10 points Max.)
Student Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar shows a well thought out layout and design. <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics and fonts were placed proportionally. <input type="checkbox"/> Fonts were readable. <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics are related to topic. (Optional + 2 pt) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar shows some time went into layout and design. <input type="checkbox"/> Placement for graphics and fonts were satisfactory. <input type="checkbox"/> Some fonts were readable. <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics were not related to topic. (Optional + 1 pt.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar shows no time went into layout and design. <input type="checkbox"/> Placement for graphics and fonts were full of problems. <input type="checkbox"/> Fonts were non-readable. <input type="checkbox"/> Not all graphics are related to topic. (Optional + 0 pt.) 	(Section II = 17 points Max.)
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar is created with an appropriate use of text, color and graphics-leaving the reader with no doubt. <input type="checkbox"/> Uses appropriate colors for season or school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar is created with moderate use of text, color, and graphics-leaving the reader unclear about the subject. <input type="checkbox"/> Uses some colors appropriate for season or school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar is created with inappropriate use of text, color and graphics- leaving the reader wondering what was the purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> No use of colors appropriate for season or school. 	(Section III = 10 points Max.)
Student Assessment and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The student demonstrated excellent use of layout and design by arranging information to fit on required page size. <input type="checkbox"/> Fonts were large enough to read. <input type="checkbox"/> Student made excellent use of time in planning project. <input type="checkbox"/> Student completed project before required time frame. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The student demonstrated good use of layout and design by arranging information to fit on required page size. <input type="checkbox"/> Fonts were not large enough to read. <input type="checkbox"/> Student made appropriate use of time in planning project. <input type="checkbox"/> Student completed project time at required time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The student demonstrated poor use of layout and design by arranging information to fit on required page size. <input type="checkbox"/> Fonts were unreadable. <input type="checkbox"/> Student made no use of time in planning project. <input type="checkbox"/> Student did not complete project with in 75 minutes. 	(Section IV = 20 points Max.)
<p>A = 57 - 43 B = 42 - 33 C = 32 - 23</p> <p>D = 22 - 13 F = 12 and below</p>				(IV Sections = 57 Max)
Total Score				

Rubric on Developing Rubrics:

Point Conversion to Letter Grade:	
90.0 – 100.0	A
80.0 – 89.9	B
70.0 – 79.9	C
60.0 – 69.9	D
Below 60.0	F

Rubric for Developing a Rubric (100 points)

Assessment Criteria	Max. Pts.	Points Earned				Comments
		Exceptional	Above Average	Average	Below Average	
1. Completeness – All relevant sections included: 1. Criteria, 2. Cont. Point Scales/Weighting, 3. Proficiency Statements, 4. Point to Grade Scale.	10	(10 points) _____ All elements included.	(8-9 points) _____ Most elements included.	(6-7 points) _____ More than half of the elements are included.	(4-5 points) _____ Fewer than half of the elements are included.	(1-3 points) _____ Few elements included; no submission.
2. Comprehensiveness – Appropriate criteria established to evaluate student performance.	15	(13-15 points) _____ Statements are logical and parallel in structure. Number of statements is appropriate.	(10-12 points) _____ 80% of the statements are logical and parallel in structure. Number of statements is appropriate.	(7-9 points) _____ 2 are true: _____ Statements are parallel in structure. _____ Appropriate # of criteria.	(4-6 points) _____ 1 is true: _____ Statements are parallel in structure. _____ Appropriate # of criteria.	(1-3 points) _____ Criteria statements do not relate to the performance being evaluated.
3. Comprehensiveness – Appropriate continuous point scale established for assessing levels of performance. Weights are established where appropriate to emphasize the intent of the evaluation.	15	(13-15 points) _____ Point scale is continuous and equally distributed across all levels of performance. Applied weights are logical and emphasize the intent of the evaluation.	(10-12 points) _____ Point scale is continuous, but distribution across levels of performance and applied weighting needs minor adjustment for consistency and to support intent of eval.	(7-9 points) _____ 2 are true: _____ Point scale is continuous. _____ Point scale is equally distributed across levels. _____ Weights support intent of evaluation.	(4-6 points) _____ 1 is true: _____ Point scale is continuous. _____ Point scale is equally distributed across levels. _____ Weights support intent of evaluation.	(1-3 points) _____ Point scale is unequal from score point to score point. Weights (if applied) do not support the intent of the evaluation.
4. Comprehensiveness – Appropriate descriptions/proficiency statements developed to describe various levels of performance.	15	(13-15 points) _____ Proficiency statements use descriptive language that indicates what a quality product or performance looks like.	(10-12 points) _____ 80% of the statements are descriptive and indicate what a quality performance looks like.	(7-9 points) _____ 70% of the statements are descriptive and indicate what a quality performance looks like.	(4-6 points) _____ 1 is true: _____ Proficiency statements are descriptive. _____ Statements indicate quality.	(1-3 points) _____ Proficiency statements are vague and ambiguous.
5. Comprehensiveness – Appropriate point conversion to grade scale included.	10	(10 points) _____ Grade scale (if needed) is logically tied to an appropriate grading system.	(8-9 points) _____ Grade scale contains a calculation error.	(6-7 points) _____ Grade scale contains two calculation errors.	(4-5 points) _____ 1 is true: _____ Grade scale is logical. _____ Grade scale relates to grades.	(1-3 points) _____ Grade scale is illogical and unrelated to a grading system.
6. Comprehensiveness – Rubric is appropriate for the lesson plan objectives being evaluated.	15	(13-15 points) _____ Rubric is clearly linked to the performance objectives, specific objectives, and evaluation activities.	(10-12 points) _____ Rubric links to perf. obj. but does not fully relate to specific obj. or evaluation act.	(7-9 points) _____ 2 are true: _____ Rubric relates to perf. obj. _____ Rubric relates to specific obj. _____ Rubric relates to evaluation act.	(4-6 points) _____ 1 is true: _____ Rubric relates to perf. obj. _____ Rubric relates to specific obj. _____ Rubric relates to evaluation act.	(1-3 points) _____ Rubric is not related to the lesson.
Neatness – Rubric is well organized and easy to read.	10	(10 points) _____	(8-9 points) _____	(6-7 points) _____	(4-5 points) _____	(1-3 points) _____
Mechanics – Rubric is free from grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.	10	(10 points) _____ Rubric free from grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.	(8-9 points) _____ 0-3 grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation errors.	(6-7 points) _____ 3-6 grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation errors.	(4-5 points) _____ 6-12 grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation errors.	(1-3 points) _____ Grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors make work difficult to read.
TOTAL:	100					

References:

Primary reference:

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2005). Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement. Upper Saddle, NJ: Pearson.

Other references:

Fleming, M., & Levie, W.H. (1993). Instructional Message Design: Principles From the Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, Second Edition, Englewood Cliffs NJ: Educational Technology Publications. ISBN 0877782539.

iRubric: <http://www.rcampus.com>

My Teacher Tools: <http://myteachertools.com>

Rubistar: <http://rubistar.4teachers.org>

Rubrics4teachers: <http://www.rubrics4teachers.com>

Wikipedia. (2008). Feedback. Available: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feedback>.

Review Questions:

Select one best answer for each of the questions below. Mark your answers (A, B, C, D, or E) in the spaces provided:

- _____ 1. According to research, which of the following methods for test feedback is most beneficial to students in the classroom?
- A. Explaining correct and incorrect answers
 - B. Giving students the correct answer on missed items
 - C. Telling students if the response is right or wrong
 - D. Telling students the total grade earned
 - E. None of the above
- _____ 2. According to research, when is the best time to provide feedback to students?
- A. Immediately after each item on the test
 - B. Immediately after the test
 - C. One day after the test
 - D. One week after the test
 - E. None of the above
- _____ 3. According to research, which type of feedback is most useful to students?
- A. Criterion-referenced – referencing a specific skill or knowledge
 - B. Norm-referenced – referencing how a student’s performance compares to other students’ performances
 - C. Both of the above types of feedback are equally useful

Review Questions – Answer Key:

Select one best answer for each of the questions below. Mark your answers (A, B, C, D, or E) in the spaces provided:

- A 1. According to research, which of the following methods for test feedback is most beneficial to students in the classroom?
- A. Explaining accurate and inaccurate student responses
 - B. Giving students the correct answer on missed items
 - C. Telling students if the response is right or wrong
 - D. Telling students the total grade earned
 - E. None of the above
- B 2. According to research, when is the best time to provide feedback to students?
- A. Immediately after each item on the test
 - B. Immediately after the test
 - C. One day after the test
 - D. One week after the test
 - E. None of the above
- C 3. According to research, which type of feedback is most useful to students?
- A. Criterion-referenced – referencing a specific skill or knowledge
 - B. Norm-referenced – referencing how a student’s performance compares to other students’ performances
 - C. Both of the above types of feedback are equally useful