

PROVIDING FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

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." Providing feedback to learners is a highly generalizable strategy that can be applied in any learning situation. Both teachers and fellow students can provide feedback in the classroom.

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. So, it is important for teachers to understand and use the most effective, research-based strategies when providing feedback to students.

Three research-based strategies for giving feedback are:

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 available in the Arts, A/V Technology & Communications resources on our website: www.cte.unt.edu.

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.

If you are interested in learning more about providing effective feedback to students, check out the book [Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement](#) by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollack. This reference is particularly helpful in understanding how to best provide feedback to students in a classroom setting.

For more information on developing effective rubrics, see Rubrics to Improve Student Learning and Performance in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics resources on our website: www.cte.unt.edu.