

Suggested Next Steps re:

Descriptive Feedback and Some Strategies (1/3, 1/3, 1/3 feedback)

Enduring Understandings

1. Understand how specific, descriptive feedback supports learning.
2. Identify what makes effective feedback.
3. Explore practical strategies to plan for providing feedback.

Overview:

Feedback is the means by which teachers enable students to ‘close the gap’ in order to take learning forward and improve their performance. For feedback to be effective, children need to know how to take action on it. All teachers provide feedback to children, which can either be oral, written, or in more practical subjects feedback through demonstration. Feedback can include teacher to student, student to student, or student to teacher.

Research about written feedback highlights some issues that need to be considered if you are moving towards a formative model of assessment:

- Learners rarely read comments, preferring to compare marks or grades with their peers as a first reaction to getting work back.
- Teachers rarely give learners time in class to read comments that are written on work and probably few, if any, learners returned to consider these comments at home.
- Often the comments are brief and/or not specific, ex. In writing, *details?* on a child’s work.
- The same written comments frequently recur in a learner’s book implying that the learners do not take note of or act on the comments.

Effective feedback is about finding the best way of communicating to learners what they have achieved and what they need to work on next. It is worth considering research that suggests that feedback given as rewards or grades enhances ‘ego’ rather than ‘task’ involvement – that is the learners compare themselves with others and their image and status, rather than encouraging them to think about the work itself and how to improve it. This focus on ‘ability’ rather than the importance of effort can be damaging to self-esteem, particularly in lower achievers. Feedback on what needs to be done can encourage all children to believe that they can improve – it should build on their previous achievement rather than act as a comparison with others.

Adapted from Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2004

Understanding Feedback:

Think of something you have learned successfully. It could be from a formal school setting or from a sport, hobby or any other aspect of your life.

What did you learn?

When did you learn it?

Why did you learn it?

How did you learn it?

What kind of help did you get?

What kind of feedback did you receive?

Defining Feedback:

Descriptive Feedback:

Specific information in the form of written comments or conversations that help the learner understand what she or he needs to do in order to improve.

Evaluative Feedback:

A summary for the student of how well she or he has performed on a particular task or during a term. Often in the form of letter grades, numbers, check marks, or other descriptors or coded symbols.

Descriptive Feedback	Evaluative Feedback

Adapted from “Facilitator’s Guide for Middle Years” by Anne Davies

Research on Feedback:

In Black and Wiliam's review of research on formative assessment (*Inside the Black Box*, 1998), they concluded that a *culture of success* along with a *belief that all can achieve* was one of the most powerful ways to assist all students to be successful. In particular, students who were typically low achievers produced higher gains when they had a clear understanding of what was achievable and what they could do to improve their work. When messages were clear about their work, and not based on comparisons, competition, or ability, students profited from feedback. In summary, their message on feedback clearly defines that:

Feedback to any pupil should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve, and should avoid comparisons with other pupils.
- Black and Wiliam (1998)

Feedback is most effective when it focuses on the task, is specific in its nature as to what the learner has done well and what they need to work on next, and is given while the task is still relevant. It opens the opportunity for mistakes to be viewed as learning opportunities when time is provided for students to take action. Suggestions should act as a form of scaffolding to ensure the student does not receive more help than necessary to complete the task. The quality of dialogue in providing feedback is an important consideration and when provided over a number of attempts is more effective than when given sporadically or in isolation. Limiting feedback limits learning. .

It is the nature, rather than the amount, that is critical when giving students feedback.
- Black and Wiliam (2002)

Feedback can encourage all students to believe they have the ability to improve their work if they are not compared with others and they are allowed to build on their previous performances. Feedback that supports learning involves choice for the learner in deciding what and how to receive that feedback. It can come from the teacher to a student, student to a student, or student to a teacher. Classrooms where an effective feedback loop during and after the learning occurs, are classrooms that build a culture of success for all students.

Feedback...nourishes the learning brain....as long as teachers see themselves as the sole source of feedback, students will not receive as much as they need to learn.
- Anne Davies (2003)

Inside the Black Box, Black and Wiliam, 1998,
Classroom Assessment: Minute by Minute, Day by Day, Dylan Wiliam et al, 2002
Making Classroom Assessment Work, Anne Davies, 2003

Ruth Sutton's Feedback with Purpose: 1/3 DEEP FEEDBACK

Rationale for Deep Feedback: Assessment is an exercise in communication; both the teacher and students need to clearly communicate as to where the student is in meeting the learning objectives for success. Deep feedback provides an opportunity for the teacher to give specific feedback to the student to assist them in knowing what's working and next steps. Give students deep feedback on assignments and tasks that are essential to learning. Deep feedback will be required only on about 1/3 of the work that students produce.

Deep feedback...

- ...is in relation to clear criteria developed with the students.
- ...requires the teacher to make specific comments.
- ...is provided promptly.
- ...requires students to review the comments and take action towards improvement
- ...provides a model for students of what effective feedback looks like.

Deep Feedback Strategies:

Connecting to criteria activities focus on the skills/learning criteria as well as aspects of quality or progress. The teacher provides information that builds on the student's strengths, points out an area of concern and gives realistic suggestions for success. Students learn where to concentrate their efforts and spend more time before work is handed in. Teachers can record comments about student work for evidence of growth.

- **Met, Not Yet Met, I Noticed...** focus is on aspects of quality or progress within the student's work against criteria that has been set. The teacher places a checkmark in either the *Met*, or *Not Yet Met* column based on the student's performance against the criteria, then adds a brief comment in the *I Noticed* column that focuses on quality or progress of the work from the last task. An *M* or *NY* can be recorded by the teacher to track student work.
- **More of, Less of...** focus is on helping students to see where to concentrate their efforts and on what specific aspects. It is an excellent way to give feedback at a mid-point. Feedback is given in relation to the criteria with 2 - 3 suggestions for what the student needs to do *more of* or *less of* to be successful on the task.
- **Key questions...** focus is on giving students suggestions that build off their strengths and provides specific information (1 or 2) to meet their targeted goals. Feedback is given against the criteria using the following questions as a prompt: *What's working?*, *What's not?*, *What's next?* By providing feedback on what is working, students can build on their strengths, while considering next steps and what is not yet working

Knowing What Counts Series: Setting and Using Criteria, 1997, Anne Davies, Kathleen Gregory and Caren Cameron

Ruth Sutton's Feedback with Purpose: 1/3 IMPRESSION FEEDBACK

Rationale for Impression Feedback:

Sometimes teachers and students need more of a general sense of how things are going with the learning. Use Impression feedback on tasks that don't require specific feedback on all of the criteria but where you want to get an impression as to where the class is at on one aspect of the criteria. Impression feedback is necessary on another approximate third of the work in which students are engaged.

Impression feedback...

- ...narrows the scope of the work for both the student and the teacher by allowing teachers to focus and give feedback on only one piece of the criteria.
- ...allows teachers to point out what is working
- ...allows teachers to zoom in on what needs improving
- ...shifts the responsibility for improving the work to students
- ...is a way to differentiate

Impression Feedback Strategies:

Highlighters:

- Select two highlighters: one colour to highlight "what is working" (green) and one colour to highlight "what needs improving" (pink) and highlight each student's work in relation to the criteria.
- Students figure out why the identified parts have been highlighted in green (what is working with them) so they will know what to keep doing next time.
- Students figure out why the identified parts have been highlighted in pink (what needs improving) and work to make the improvements.
- The teacher can work with small groups on a mini-lesson according to information collected from highlighting (i.e. work with those students who had a lot of parts highlighted in pink).

Traffic Lights:

- Explain to students, in advance, the meaning of the green, yellow and red marks (for example):
 - Green = meets the criteria
 - Yellow = partially meets the criteria
 - Red = doesn't meet the criteria. Stop and don't go further until we talk
- Mark each student's work in relation to the criteria
- Students work together to figure out why it is green or yellow and work to improve their work where necessary.
- The teacher can work with small groups on a mini-lesson according to information collected from the traffic lighting (i.e. work with those students who had a lot of red dots).

Post-It-Notes:

- Write specific feedback on a post-it note about the student's successes or a suggestion for improvement, related to the selected criteria.
- Students work to improve the work based on the feedback
- The next time students do a similar piece, they can move the post-it note and include a "Please notice..." statement.
- Teachers can collect the post-it notes and record growth.
- This is an excellent strategy for students to give each other feedback.

Ruth Sutton's Feedback with Purpose: 1/3 SELF or PEER FEEDBACK

Rationale for Self or Peer Feedback: Peer and self feedback provide a starting point for conversations that help students find proof of their learning and take responsibility for it. When students are actively involved in the learning process, and identify what they know and don't know, they are able to review and spend more time on areas of need. "Kids learn about what they are doing and what they need to do" (Sutton, 2005). Peer or self feedback can be used on the final third of work that students produce, and generally should be used with simpler, shorter tasks that are suitable for students to mark.

Peer or Self feedback...

- ...is a way for kids to learn about what they are doing and what they need to do next
- ...works best in a climate where students see mistakes as an opportunity for improvement
- ...reduces the feedback workload for teachers while engaging students in meaningful learning
- ...is highly effective when students have a clear understanding of the learning destination (use of I can statements)

Peer or Self Feedback Strategies:

Mystery Feedback

This activity supports all students in the class, particularly those who have difficulty expressing themselves through written word. Rather than writing, students create a drawing connected to a retelling, main idea, sequencing, etc. that meets the criteria that has been set. Each student is given a number to write on the back of their drawing, names are omitted. At an early or mid point in the work, students hand in their drawing to be tacked to the front board. Drawings receive oral feedback that is connected specifically to the criteria, from the class or a small group. Drawings are then returned for further work.

Two Stars and a Wish

Students give feedback that is specific and descriptive (not evaluative) on a task, assignment, piece of art work, etc. The feedback is directly connected to the criteria for the assignment and tells one or two "star" things the student has done well (met) and one "wish" for the student (not yet met) to work on.

Margin symbols for daily work/tests

Students use symbols to demonstrate understanding, possible questions, or aha moments within their work. Symbols can be used during reading, writing or test taking activities. Some examples are :

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| ✓ : I agree | ? : I wonder | ! : Interesting |
| D : this is difficult | E : this is easy | U : I'm not too sure |
| ☺ : got it | ☹ : I'm not sure | ☹ : I need help |

** *Building Blocks to Self-Assessment*, www.aaia.org.uk

Managing Feedback – Forms for Teachers:

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT RECORD #1:

Topic/Task: Ted Harrison Painting		Date:				
Student's Name	Criteria:					Next Steps
	Sky 1/3	Lines	Colour	Strokes	Focal	
Abigail	M	M	M	N	M	<i>Work on holding the brush properly so strokes flow horizontally</i>
Brian	M	M	M	M	M	<i>Move on to more challenging project</i>
Charlie	M	M	N	M	M	<i>Go back and re-teach monochromatic colours</i>
Debbie	M	M	M	M	N	<i>Show examples of paintings with strong focal points</i>
Notes: (to guide the effective management of the topic/task next time around)						

M = criteria met N = criteria not yet met

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT RECORD #2:

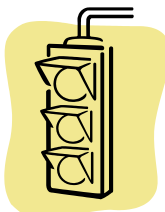
Student's Name	STORY #1: 09/15	STORY #2: 09/22	STORY #3: 09/30	STORY #4: 10/05
Abigail	R A F T S	R A F T S	R A F T S	R A F T S
Brian	R A F T S	R A F T S	R A F T S	R A F T S
Charlie	R A F T S	R A F T S	R A F T S	R A F T S
Debbie	R A F T S	R A F T S	R A F T S	R A F T S

RAFTS = Role, Audience, Format, Topic, Strong Verb

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT RECORD #3:

STUDENT: Abigail	TASK	MARK
LEARNING ACTIVITIES (weighted at 0%)	GRAPH #1 Sept. 6	AD
	GRAPH #2 Sept. 9	PR
	CH. 1 Vocab Sept. 12	C
	LAB #1 Sept. 15	=
	CH. 1 QUIZ Sept 17	11/20
	LAB #2 Sept. 22	+
	CH. 1 REVIEW Sept 29	C
EVALUATIVE ACTIVITIES (weighted at 100%)	GRAPH #3 Sept. 16	80%
	LAB #3 Sept. 28	85%
	CH. 1 TEST Oct. 4	70%

Managing Feedback – Forms for Students:

Traffic Lights Checklist for: <u> Lead Paragraph </u>				
		<p>Directions: Read each of the learning outcome statements and decide if your response meets the following:</p> <p>Green Light: I am moving along confidently in this area. Yellow Light: I am moving along with caution in this area. Red Light: I have not started moving in this area.</p>		
Learning Outcome	Green	Yellow	Red	Evidence or Plan for Improvement
I can identify common organic and inorganic substances essential to life.	✓			<i>Evidence – I listed them for homework and I matched them correctly on the last quiz.</i>
I can describe forms of organic matter made by plants and animals.		✓		<i>Plan - I sometimes get confused on this but will review my notes every night.</i>
I can describe how chemicals that are put into the environment can have their concentrations changed.			✓	<i>Plan - I need to go over this with my teacher before the test. I will also re-read this section</i>

				<i>in the text book.</i>
I can describe how nutrients are consumed and how some are hard to eliminate.	✓			<i>Evidence – John and I included this information in our report.</i>