



Providing Feedback That Feeds the Whole Person

What to do: Use the reflection guide below to consider feedback that has impacted you positively and negatively. Then, as you read about the characteristics of good feedback, tips for providing constructive feedback, and the suggestions for using rubrics, circle or underline the ideas you want to put into practice. Keep this guide as a reminder.

Why it matters: Well-timed and well-designed feedback is an important factor in student achievement, staff performance, student-staff connectedness, and overall morale. It can have a positive impact on the culture in the classroom, the school, and your out-of-school time program, and it can nurture feelings of satisfaction and empowerment.

Reflect on the following questions. Then complete the activity below.

- Have you ever received feedback that helped you realize a strength or talent you have?
- Have you ever received feedback that made you doubt yourself or your abilities?
- What were the characteristics of each type of feedback?
- What type of relationship did you have with the person giving the feedback?
- How and when was the feedback given?

After you reflect on your personal experience, write down at least one takeaway you'll apply when you provide feedback to staff or students.

Positive feedback experience:	
Negative feedback experience:	
What were the similarities or differences?	
Feedback reflection takeaway:	



Characteristics of Effective Feedback

1. Instructional in nature.
2. Sensitive to the individual.
3. Given in a timely manner
4. Provides an example of what and how to improve.

Tips for Providing Constructive Feedback

- **Think before you speak.** Consider the social, emotional, and intellectual aspects (and potential impacts) of your feedback.
- **Look for the positive.** Feedback shouldn't be just about errors.
- **Choose your words carefully.** Saying "Let's take a second look at this answer" or "This answer is incorrect" rather than "Here's what you did wrong" helps to depersonalize the error and make students more receptive. This can be especially important for students who are used to receiving harsh criticism or punishment. Fear shuts down learning, curiosity, and relationships. Repeatedly hearing "You did this wrong" can make people question their ability rather than question the accuracy of the response.
- **Develop audience awareness.** Follow the old adage: *Praise in public, correct in private.*
- **Be curious.** There are some right-or-wrong answers, but many questions or problems have a range of possible solutions. Ask students (or staff members) why or how they arrived at a certain conclusion. They may have thought of something you hadn't considered.
- **Uplift.** Feedback is an opportunity to help people identify their strengths, like creativity, problem solving, and carefully reading and following directions. It's also a chance to build confidence *and* competence. Decide which of these statements do that best:
 - In your amoeba drawing, you labeled these two parts incorrectly.
 - I love your idea of color coding the parts of an amoeba in your drawing. Two parts have incorrect labels. I bet you can figure out which ones and correct the labels. Then it will be perfect!
- **Be specific.** Behavior-specific praise is a simple, proven, and easy-to-implement strategy. Giving targeted compliments for desired behaviors such as, "I appreciate how Rajesh put away the craft materials," or "Julie and Esme really focused on finishing their math today."
- **Know when to be quiet.** Give others time to process and reflect on feedback.
- **Treat feedback as part of a bigger process.** Feedback should not be the end. Provide opportunities for students or staff members to implement the feedback they receive, and help them celebrate when they do.



Rubrics as a Road Map

As students complete projects and build their program portfolios, or as staff members need or request feedback on performance, rubrics can be a good way to provide feedback. Provide the rubric in advance and spend time together analyzing it so users clearly understand the performance expectations. As you build and implement rubrics, be sure to:

- Clearly state the purpose of the assignment (what you want students or staff members to achieve) and the assessment (how they'll demonstrate that they achieved the goal).
- Decide what type of rubric to use:
 - **Holistic.** This is the most general type of rubric, with all evaluation criteria viewed collectively to provide a single score. A single scale of three to five specifications is typically used, with *Average* or *Meets Expectations* being the middle of the scale.
 - **Analytic.** This type breaks down the elements of an assignment so that each person can see where they met or exceeded the criteria — and which elements need improvement. For example, students might be rated on the components of organization, creativity, content, and presentation, and also get an overall score that combines the components.
 - **Single point.** You may not use this type of rubric because it only describes proficiency. It doesn't describe ways in which students or staff might not meet the criteria, nor does it specify how to go beyond expectations.
- Decide what the rating scale will be.
- Show what different levels of performance look like and be specific about what distinguishes each level.

*The key to learning is feedback. It is nearly impossible
to learn anything without it.*

— Steven Levitt

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