

Providing Feedback Strategies

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ABC Feedback

Description

The teacher sets up a simple structure for learners to use to ensure that their feedback to peers is effective and appropriate. This structure uses the mnemonic ABC to represent each of the steps for giving peers effective feedback: A = Action, B = Because, and C = Could we.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

This feedback provides clarity for students about what they have and have not accomplished in relation to the success criteria.

This strategy promotes activating peers as a resource. It provides opportunities for students to clarify and build on the ideas of their peers, which helps them clarify their own understanding and develop a respect for the ideas of others.

There is evidence to suggest that students often communicate more effectively with each other than they do with adults, so the person receiving feedback may get information that is easier for him or her to act on.

Students giving the feedback gain a deeper understanding of the success criteria by applying them to the work of others.

Implementation

Introduce the ABC Feedback structure to students as they are preparing for peer feedback conferences with each other.

A for Action. This step focuses on proper data collection so that the feedback conversation centers on specific actions to consider in the peer's work based on the success criteria. This step includes looking at the peer's work, comparing it with the stated success criteria, and determining which strengths are present and which actions to consider as students revise their work. The student then shares this feedback with the peer.

B for Because. This step focuses on why the actions identified in Step A need to be addressed. Here the conversation moves to the success criteria. The student points out the relevant success criteria to help his or her peer see why the student reviewer is concentrating on the specific actions.

C for Could we. This step focuses on developing a plan for taking action during revisions. Here the students brainstorm and identify possible solutions, resources, needs, and action plans for the learner to move forward with revisions.

Use an ABC Feedback Worksheet to serve as a record of the conference. The student giving feedback makes notes under A and B in preparation for the peer conference and presents them to the student receiving feedback. He or she will then take notes on what to do next during the C portion of the conversation.

Tips

It might be worthwhile, at least initially, to carefully form partnerships (e.g., avoid pairing up students with close friends).

Peer feedback is most effective when students feel comfortable with each other and supported by their peers, respect each other's opinions, and feel able to take risks and make mistakes. For this reason, be deliberate about establishing a safe environment and allowing students to have some guided practice with this strategy with sample work before doing actual peer conferences.

Helping students focus on feedback that is kind, respectful, helpful, and specific is a key to making the feedback manageable and useful.

Use peer feedback only to make improvements, never to contribute to a final grade.

Circulate during both the practice session and the actual peer feedback conference to observe and give in-the-moment feedback to students as they are meeting. As students are talking, listen for:

- student use of the success criteria when providing specific feedback
- students directly referring to evidence in their peer's work
- language that focuses on the work and not on their peer (judgement-free)
- the overall quality of the feedback

Time reminders are useful to help students pace the conversation. Plan five minutes at the end of these conferences to debrief the experience, asking questions such as:

- What was easy about that? What was hard?
- What did you notice when . . . ?
- What did you learn about . . . ? What did you learn about helpful feedback?

Circling Errors

Description

The teacher circles errors on a piece of student work, but does not give the solution or correct response.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

This feedback informs students that their answers are correct or incorrect. This alone doesn't provide much information about what to do next, but it encourages students to be more engaged by thinking for themselves about how to improve.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

Review student work, and circle errors related to the learning target/success criteria that you shared with students. You may choose to make your own notes about what kind of errors were present for each student, but don't write any comments or give any hints as to what the correction is.

Upon receipt of their work, with errors circled, students take time to correct the circled errors and resubmit their work. You may circle all errors on the work or only a portion of them. In the latter case, you may then want the student to peruse the rest of the work to look for similar errors.

A key to this technique (and most others concerned with using feedback to move thinking and learning forward) is that the teacher gives students time and a structure to review and revise their work. This can be done individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Students should then resubmit their work to complete the cycle.

Tips

If you have written success criteria (like a checklist or rubric), consider reminding students to refer to the criteria while they think about how to revise their work.

If you gave feedback only on certain types of errors, be sure to let the student know what you were (and were not) looking for. This explanation can preempt students thinking that all portions of their work are of the highest quality.

Comment-Only Marking

Description

The teacher provides only comments—no grades—on student work, in order to focus students on how to improve their learning, instead of on their rank in the class.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Research suggests that students learn better when teachers give grades (numeric or letter) as seldom as possible while students are learning because once a grade appears on the work, students are unlikely to take in any other feedback.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

Return a piece of work to students with only comments and no grade or performance level indicated. Provide students with solid support, established structures, and time to revise and improve the work. The comments are specific to the qualities of the work (learning focused), designed to promote thinking (close the gap), and intended to provide clear guidance (a recipe for action) on how to improve.

Writing effective comments that make students think is not always easy to do. It is a good idea to practice this technique with other teachers for ideas and feedback. It is important to ensure that your comments are nonjudgmental (whether positive or negative) and speak only to what is and isn't evident in the current work as it relates to the learning target and success criteria (learning focused).

Make sure that your feedback is directly related to the learning target and success criteria that you clarified for students prior to beginning the task. For example, if you give feedback to a student that says, Your conclusion is weak, then we need to ensure that a strong conclusion is part of the success criteria that you presented and that the student understands what constitutes a strong conclusion.

Tips

Consider conferencing with students, so they are clear about their next steps.

To avoid doing too much of the thinking for the students, frame some comments in the form of questions. For example, instead of commenting that a student's paper lacks a conclusion, try something like It felt as if it ended abruptly. What is an effective way to end a paper so as to leave your reader with a feeling of closure? Another option is to challenge the learner to figure out what is missing: I felt that it ended abruptly. Why?

If your students are very young or are struggling readers, you may also give comments orally.

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De Bono's Thinking Hats (modified)

Description

This strategy uses Thinking Hats to prompt discussion through structured questions and encourages giving feedback by thinking from different perspectives.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

This strategy allows learners to look at a task or issue from different perspectives. Feedback is focused from that perspective. By allowing each student to provide feedback from each perspective, the students grow in their ability to critically analyze thinking and performance from multiple viewpoints.

Implementation

The modification for use as a feedback strategy uses all 6 hats at once but each member of the group gets a different color hat. Each color hat looks at a task or issue from a different perspective and gives focused feedback from that perspective.

Blue: Student presenting their work with a focus on gathering feedback from each team member.

White: Focus on facts. "This information is not clear to me. What else can you tell us about this?"

Yellow: Focus on the positives and benefits. "It was very easy to understand the data in your graph."

Black: Focus on risks and weaknesses. "There is not enough contrast so it is really hard to read the text on this picture."

Red: Focus on emotion. "The video you included makes me feel sad that more isn't being done about plastic in the oceans."

Green: Focus on alternatives and new ideas. "Can you create an illustration of the machine that you are describing?"

Provide time for students to reflect and act on the feedback received.

Tips

The teacher should model the strategy. Guiding questions or prompts may be provided.

Delayed Grading/Scoring

Description

The teacher does not immediately give a grade, rating, or score of any kind for student work. Instead, he or she provides written comments (see Comment-Only Marking) that address the quality of the work. Only later, after the student has had a chance to revise, the teacher may provide a grade.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Research suggests that students learn better when teachers give grades (numeric or letter) as seldom as possible while students are learning, because once a grade appears on the work, students are unlikely to take in any other feedback.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

First give written comments to provide guidance for student improvement. Then the student revises the work and resubmits. After this, you may give a grade or repeat the process. Build time and structures into the day-to-day schedule to allow students to take advantage of this and the other feedback strategies that are designed to move thinking and learning forward.

Strive to ensure that the comments are nonjudgmental (whether positive or negative) toward the learner and speak only to what is and isn't evident in the current work as it relates to the learning target and success criteria (learning focused). Ensure that your feedback is directly related to the learning target and success criteria that you clarified for students prior to beginning the task. For example, if you give feedback to a student that says, Your conclusion is weak, then you need to ensure that a strong conclusion is part of the success criteria that you presented and that the student understands what constitutes a strong conclusion.

Tips

Consider conferencing with students, so they are clear about their next steps.

To save time, use a copy of the rubric or other form of success criteria to highlight areas for the student to attend to. This allows written comments to be shorter and more precise.

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Find and Correct Errors

Description

The teacher tells students how many errors the paper, page, paragraph, or problem contains but does not tell them explicitly where or what the errors are. The students must find and correct their own errors.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

By not identifying the mistakes or making the corrections for the learner, this type of feedback encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work.

This feedback alone doesn't provide much information about what to do next, but it encourages students to be more engaged by thinking about their work and reflecting about how to improve.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

Return a piece of work to students with the number of errors noted at the top of the paper. Give students direction to examine their work, find errors, and correct the errors.

This strategy is flexible as appropriate, depending on the class, the students, or the assignment. For example, on a piece of written work, you may decide to write the number of errors per page, per paragraph, or per line in the margin of the paper. If students need more support for written work, you may put a dot in the margin for each error in the line or paragraph.

The idea is to give students only a general idea of where to find the errors in order to promote active reflection on their own work.

Provide solid support, established structures, and time for students to make the most of this opportunity.

Tips

Create a structure or schedule to review the student's revisions, and be sure that he or she found them all. Sometimes this strategy may require students to make two or three passes of their work before they find and correct all errors.

This strategy lends itself well to assignments that focus on skills like computation and spelling. In some cases, it can work with more complex assignments.

Determining major misconceptions may be better with different strategies.

Know your audience. If material is too new or challenging, providing feedback with such little information may overwhelm students.

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Focused Grading

Description

The teacher selects only certain aspects of student work to focus on when providing feedback.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Feedback provides clarity for students about what they have and have not accomplished in relation to the success criteria.

This strategy allows students to focus on one key skill or concept at a time, rather than be overwhelmed by too much. Especially when the content is new and/or complex, focusing on one thing at a time can help students see revisions as doable.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

Grade only one or two specific aspects within a larger student work (e.g., content of a persuasive essay, but not the grammar, or vice versa) because you noticed that those aspects need particular attention and/or because you know the learner may get overwhelmed by receiving too much feedback all at once.

Grading only a few things provides more focused and thorough feedback on specific skills or criteria. It also helps students by setting clearer, attainable goals for their next revision. Make sure that students actually address the comments in future work.

You may or may not reveal the focus of the grading ahead of time to students. In some cases, it may be obvious because it may be an area targeted as a personal learning goal. This strategy is particularly useful if the comments can relate directly to the success criteria for the work.

Tips

Directly relate the feedback provided to the learning target and success criteria that you clarified for students prior to beginning the task. For example, if you give feedback to a student that says, insufficient supporting details, then ensure that supporting details is part of the presented success criteria and that the student understands what constitutes a supporting detail.

Formative Feedback for Learning

Description

This iPad® app is designed to foster and encourage communication between students and teachers. Students record a video, and peers and the teacher can provide feedback through the use of icons and some basic editing.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

The use of formative feedback from self, peers, or teachers and the time to use it provide students the opportunity to move their learning forward.

Implementation

After downloading the app, students can upload existing video or create a video of themselves at work and upload it to the app to receive formative feedback from peers and the teacher. Students can also record notes for themselves. The message icons and pencil allow the viewer to pause the video to offer constructive/growth feedback in both icon and written forms.

No teacher account is necessary.

Tips

Use of an iPad 2 or above is suggested.

Formative Marking Practices

Description

The teacher allows students to resubmit work to receive a higher grade. The teacher may provide feedback using a variety of strategies with the focus on the student use of the feedback before or even after grading.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

Set up a system in which students can continuously revise and resubmit work to show a progressing level of understanding and proficiency. Use the highest level of understanding or proficiency to calculate the end summative grade.

Unless you have already implemented a system of standards-based grading, you may need to develop a system to record and track level of understanding. Be explicit with students (and parents) about how and when they can resubmit an assignment.

To guide future conversation with students and parents, keep track of the kinds of errors made and the progress a student makes on those errors in subsequent revisions. Students may be set up to do this tracking and monitor their own progress.

Tips

Students who have already mastered the material can work on challenge or enrichment activities while others are receiving feedback and revising their work.

Offer various supportive options (e.g., meeting with the teacher, meeting with a peer, self-guided review and revision) for students to get the help they need in order to successfully revise their work.

This practice must include the use of some other strategy to actually provide descriptive feedback.

To avoid confusion, make an extra effort to be clear with parents about why you don't give grades until the end of the learning. Ensure that your administration supports this practice should concerns arise.

Gallery Critique

Description

Students create work on chart paper and post it on the walls around the classroom. Students walk from chart to chart providing feedback to their peers, using sticky notes and prompts. Prompts might be as simple as I noticed . . . and I wonder . . .

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

This strategy allows students to practice using success criteria to provide feedback. It provides a method for students to commit success criteria to memory, so it is especially helpful if the teacher uses certain success criteria with various assignments over a long period of time.

Students get to see many examples of work, which can help improve their understanding of the work and reduce confusion. The strategy may sometimes serve as feedback and reteaching all in one.

There is evidence to suggest that students often communicate more effectively with each other than they do with adults, so the person receiving feedback may get information that is easier for him or her to act on.

Implementation

Students post their work on the walls of the classroom. Using the provided success criteria, students begin a gallery walk to review work of their peers and offer feedback. When students return to their own piece of work, they spend time reviewing the peer feedback, asking any clarifying questions, and begin to make adjustments to the work in response to the feedback.

Part of training students to provide gallery critiques should include helping them be strong on content but soft on the person and helping the originator be reflective and provide ideas for moving forward. You can foster student understanding by establishing and discussing the idea that being kind and respectful does not mean shying away from pointing out important errors. Here's a quick tip to remind students when they provide feedback:

- Strong on Content
- Soft on Person
- Step Up, Step Back (All students need the chance to step up and share their thinking, and then to step back and allow others to offer feedback as well.)

Tips

This strategy also promotes activating peers as a resource. It provides opportunities for students to clarify and build on the ideas of their peers, which helps them clarify their own understanding and develop a respect for the ideas of others.

Providing prompts or structure for student comments may be helpful.

Remind students to read the other feedback that peers provide before providing their own (e.g., to try to say something different) and to notice recurring comments.

Helping students focus on feedback that is kind, respectful, helpful, and specific is a key to making the feedback manageable and useful.

Glow and Grow

Description

Students provide feedback to peers in a two-step process that highlights strengths and areas of growth as well as offers suggestions for revision.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

This strategy allows students to practice using success criteria to provide effective feedback. It also allows students to focus on one key skill or concept at a time, rather than be overwhelmed by too much. Especially when the content is new to the students and/or complex, focusing on one thing at a time can help students see revisions as doable.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher doesn't make corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work. Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

This strategy promotes activating peers as a resource. It provides opportunities for students to clarify and build on the ideas of their peers, which helps them clarify their own understanding and develop a respect for the ideas of others.

Implementation

Students form pairs. Student A shares his or her work with student B either by reading it out loud or by sharing an actual work product to review.

Student B then engages in a two-step process: Step one is to identify a place where the student's work glows or meets expectations. Step two is to offer a comment about how a student might grow to improve or take the next steps with his or her work. Then student A and B switch roles.

One way to implement this strategy is by having students use a yellow highlighter (glow) to show on the peers' work where peers have met or exceeded expectations. Students use a green highlighter to show where peers need to grow in their work.

Students may opt to have an additional mini-conference with their peer or you to clarify what is written on the feedback form.

Tips

Make sure students have been taught how to give effective feedback prior to engaging in this activity.

Consider circulating during this activity to ensure that the peer feedback is correct and that the student receiving feedback is clear on what it means.

Peer feedback is best supported when the student providing feedback has written success criteria to focus on while providing feedback.

Use peer feedback only to make improvements, never to contribute to a final grade.

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I Tell You, You Tell Me

Description

A simple form guides the communication between student and teacher during the revision process.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Students have the responsibility to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

This strategy allows students to go at their own pace in making revisions, so as not to be bored or overwhelmed.

Implementation

Include a revision checklist at the start of any notebook or workbook. Once you mark a piece of work, list the assignment (or page number) and the date, and sign the checklist. After students complete the revisions, they also date and sign the checklist. The student must sign the checklist before you will mark the next assignment. You are telling the student when and what to revise, and the student is telling you when he or she is ready for the next assignment.

Tips

If parents or students complain about the lack of feedback, use the system and evidence to support your position. This log would also provide information to both you and students about the time taken to do revisions. This information might be particularly helpful if timeliness is an issue.

Kaizena

Description

This iPad® app is designed to collect quality feedback.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

The use of formative feedback from self, peers, or teachers and the time to use it provide students the opportunity to move their learning forward.

Implementation

Create success criteria or a rubric for the task. Then, with student peers, provide the student feedback by tracking the criteria and commenting on the student's work. These comments may be provided with a voice option. The student can then replay the feedback as often as needed.

The student receives notification when he or she responds to the comments.

Tips

Sign-up is via Google™ or email.

Mastery Grading

Description

The teacher does not accept student work unless it is of a specific quality. The teacher, along with the student, can decide together what quality level a piece of work should attain.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Research suggests that students learn better when teachers give grades (numeric or letter) as seldom as possible while students are learning, because once a grade appears on the work, students are unlikely to take in any other feedback.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

Mastery grading is a system of grading based on demonstrated learning rather than on speed of learning.

Provide clear expectations for students about the success criteria for a task before students engage in the work. Give frequent feedback to students so that they are clear about what areas they need to work on. Students are responsible for making revisions and seeking out additional help when needed.

You may offer multiple ways for students to show proficiency.

For example, one teacher gives only one grade, an A. Students are expected to continue to revise and resubmit their work as many times as necessary to receive an A. The end-of-course grade is then determined by the number of assignments that have received an A.

In another example, the teacher awards a plus (+), slash (/), or minus (-). A slash or plus means that the student has mastered the necessary skills for the current concept. A minus is accompanied by comments for how to improve, and the student is expected to revise his or her work before the unit test.

Tips

Students who have already mastered the material can work on challenge or enrichment activities while you are providing feedback and others are revising their work.

Offer various supportive options (e.g., meeting with you, meeting with a peer, self-guided review and revision, tutoring, online exercises) for students to get the help they need in order to successfully revise their work.

This practice must include the use of some other strategy to actually provide descriptive feedback.

To avoid confusion, make an extra effort to be clear with parents about why you do not give grades until the end of the learning.

Ensure that your administration supports this practice should concerns arise.

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Met, Not Yet, I Noticed

Description

The focus with this strategy is on weighing aspects of quality or progress within the students' work against criteria that the teacher has set.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Feedback provides clarity for students about what they have and have not accomplished in relation to the success criteria. Feedback specifically tied to a rubric helps learners see a description about what the next level looks like, therefore helping them compare that with their own work and generate their own ideas about how to take their work to the next level.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher doesn't make corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work to discover what they have or have not done correctly and to give them ideas about how to move their work to the next level.

Implementation

Forms or charts may be helpful when using this strategy. List the criteria in a table, and have three additional columns to the right of each for Met, Not Yet, and I Noticed.

Place a checkmark in either the Met (M) or the Not Yet (NY) met column based on the student's performance against the criteria, and then add a brief comment in the I Noticed (IN) column that focuses on quality or progress of the work from the last task.

This strategy works best when students are allowed enough time to engage in the work and an opportunity to compare their first efforts with the success criteria on their own (prior to teacher feedback), because that engagement and comparison are where the real learning occurs.

On the other hand, make sure that you give the feedback in time for students to adapt their thinking and revise their work, before they have developed habits of practicing incorrectly or are no longer motivated to revise the work.

Tips

Ensure that comments are nonjudgmental (either positive or negative) toward the learner and speak only to what is and isn't evident in the current work as it relates to the learning target and success criteria.

Be sure that students have a working understanding of the success criteria so they can better understand what may have led to a Not Yet in a particular category.

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No Complete Solutions

Description

The teacher gives students only partial information to solve a problem or complete a piece of work.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

This strategy provides more guidance for students who are very new to the content or are struggling, while still not doing all of the thinking for them.

Implementation

You may begin to solve a mathematics problem or may write only a sentence or two to improve a piece of writing. This small amount of feedback helps jumpstart a student's thinking, and he or she can then take the time to complete the solution or finish the paragraph.

This strategy works particularly well in mathematics and science classes, but it can be helpful in any discipline to move student learning forward.

Tips

Consider using this as a strategy to transition, over time, from a more directive to a less directive (e.g., find and correct) feedback strategy.

This is a great strategy to use when you have tried less direct feedback strategies, but the learner is still struggling. Typically, this would not be a first resort when giving feedback.

Peer Feedback Conference

Description

Students take turns in a short conference playing the roles of both teacher and student. Students use a rubric and focus their conversation on one or two traits in the rubric.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Helping students focus on feedback that is kind, respectful, helpful, and specific is a key to making the feedback manageable and useful.

This strategy promotes activating peers as a resource. It provides opportunities for students to clarify and build on the ideas of their peers, which helps them clarify their own understanding and develop a respect for the ideas of others. There is evidence to suggest that students often communicate more effectively with each other than they do with adults, so the person receiving feedback may get information that is easier for him or her to act on.

Students giving the feedback gain a deeper understanding of the success criteria by applying them to the work of others.

Implementation

Students form pairs and trade their work. Each student reviews his or her classmate's work, along with the rubric, and makes notes about findings.

Next, two students meet to conference. Student A (in the teacher's role) shares his or her comments as Student B (in the student role) listens and makes notes. After discussing possible next steps, students work together to outline a plan for Student A.

The students then reverse roles, and the process begins with Student B talking.

Before using this strategy, teach students to give effective feedback and ensure they've had an opportunity to practice this strategy with each other using sample work before using each other's actual work.

Tips

When creating work samples for the practice session, include some critical errors (challenging students in the activity to point out a problem in a helpful way), some errors that students in the class often make, or errors that might help you diagnostically.

Circulate during the practice session and the actual peer feedback conference to observe and give on-the-fly feedback to students as they are meeting. As students are talking, listen for student use of the success criteria when providing specific feedback and the quality of the feedback. Time reminders are useful to help students pace the conversation. Plan five minutes at the end of these conferences to debrief the experience, asking questions such as:

- What was easy about that? What was hard?
- What did you notice when . . . ?
- What did you learn about . . . ?
- What did you learn about helpful feedback?

Use peer feedback only to make improvements, never to contribute to a final grade.

Reach for the Next Level

Description

Students identify areas of improvement in their own work by comparing their assignments with exemplars at the next level of achievement. With advanced students, this strategy allows the teacher to find room for improvement, no matter how good the original is.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Students discover for themselves that they need to set higher standards. By allowing students to view many examples of work, this strategy can help improve their understanding of the work and reduce confusion. The strategy may sometimes serve as feedback and reteaching all in one. This strategy promotes self assessment and encourages students to use the examples to give them ideas about how to move their work to the next level.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher doesn't make corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work.

Implementation

After you review and assess a product or performance according to the success criteria, return the work to the students with their current level of proficiency written on it. You, a peer, or the students themselves can initially assess the work.

Provide examples of student work at various levels of quality at different stations around the room. The student then goes to the station that has examples at the level that is the next highest level from his or her current work. Students at the station can examine these examples together and converse about what is different about their own work as compared with the examples. They can also support each other in generating ideas for improving their work based on the group review.

Tips

Begin saving samples of student work now. Consider sharing with colleagues to speed the collection process and build a larger sample base. In a pinch, use teacher mock-ups in lieu of actual student work.

If content allows for creativity or multiple solutions, select varying examples of student work products to illustrate varying approaches that would be acceptable ways to show understanding.

Reference to Rubrics

Description

The teacher refers to the specific rubric being used for a particular piece of work when giving students feedback.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Feedback provides clarity for students about what they have and have not accomplished in relation to the success criteria. The act of feedback being specifically tied to a rubric (learning focused) helps learners see a description about what the next level looks like, therefore helping them compare that with their own work and generate their own ideas about how to take their work to the next level.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher doesn't make corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work. Research suggests that students learn better when teachers give grades (numeric or letter) as seldom as possible while students are learning, because once a grade appears on the work, students are unlikely to take in any other feedback.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

Provide a rubric for students to use as a guide for an assigned task. Clarify for students the success criteria for each trait listed in the rubric to ensure understanding of quality.

When students have completed a first attempt at the assignment, they submit it to you. Highlight relevant sections on a copy of the rubric to provide an initial performance level on each trait.

Make explicit reference in your feedback to the rubric being employed to assess the work. Point to a particular level or important language in the rubric to give students more precise information about how to move their thinking and learning forward. This also helps students make a stronger connection between the learning targets and success criteria.

Staple the rubric to the work, and return the work to students for revisions.

This strategy is equally efficacious if you refer to a scoring guide or some other form of success criteria. This can be a big timesaver for you if, rather than write out long comments, you can highlight or circle parts of the rubric/scoring guide/checklist that apply to what the learner should pay attention to and get by with shorter comments only where needed.

Tips

Be careful to allow students enough time to engage in the work so that they can compare their first efforts with the success criteria themselves, because that engagement and comparison are where the real learning occurs.

On the other hand, make sure that you give the feedback in time for students to adapt their thinking and revise their work, before they have developed habits of practicing incorrectly or are no longer motivated to revise the work.

If you are giving feedback only on certain types of errors, be sure to let the student know what you are (and are not) looking for. This explanation can avoid students thinking that all portions of their work are of the highest quality.

Stop Light Highlighting

Description

The teacher uses differently colored highlighters to provide feedback on student work about what is working and what needs improvement.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Highlighting in this way confirms for students what they have done well and what they need to improve. This feedback alone doesn't provide much information about what to do next, but it encourages students to be more engaged by thinking for themselves about how to improve.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher doesn't specifically identify mistakes or make the corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work as it relates to the success criteria.

Implementation

Select two highlighters: one color to highlight what is working (green) and one color to highlight what needs improving (pink). Then highlight each student's work in relation to the criteria.

Students figure out why you have highlighted the identified parts in green (what is working for them) so they will know what to keep doing next time.

Next, students figure out why you have highlighted the identified parts in pink (what needs improving) and work to make the improvements.

You 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 pink highlighting).

Tips

Know your audience. If materials are too new or challenging, it may be difficult to work with so little information.

Be careful to allow students enough time to engage in the work so that they can compare their first efforts with the success criteria themselves, because that engagement and comparison are where the real learning occurs.

On the other hand, make sure that you give the feedback in time for students to adapt their thinking and revise their work, before they have developed habits of practicing incorrectly or are no longer motivated to revise the work.

If you are giving feedback only on certain types of errors, be sure to let the student know what you are (and are not) looking for. This explanation can avoid students thinking that all portions of their work are of the highest quality.

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Strategy Cards

Description

The teacher gives students cards containing a couple of strategies for improvement, based on what is or is not present in their work.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Feedback provides clarity for students about what they have and have not accomplished in relation to the success criteria.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher doesn't make corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work.

This strategy allows students to focus on one key skill or concept at a time, rather than be overwhelmed by too much. Especially when the content is new to the students and/or complex, focusing on one thing at a time can help students see revisions as doable.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

Write ideas for improving a piece of work on little cards to give to students. Sometimes the cards have suggestions for improving two or three different things, and sometimes the cards have various suggestions for improving one basic thing.

Students use the cards as guidance to revise their work.

Some students find that feedback given on little cards (3" x 5") is easier to understand and apply. It seems less threatening to some and easier to digest for others.

Tips

You can develop a set of more or less standard strategy cards based on the common misconceptions and errors you encounter. Then you can photocopy them in advance of marking.

Be careful to allow students enough time to engage in the work so that they can compare their first efforts with the success criteria themselves, because that engagement and comparison are where the real learning occurs.

On the other hand, make sure that you give the feedback in time for students to adapt their thinking and revise their work, before they have developed habits of practicing incorrectly or are no longer motivated to revise the work.

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That's Good! Now This!

Description

Teachers use this simple frame to provide feedback to students, identifying specific aspects in each student's work related to the learning targets or success criteria.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Feedback provides clarity for students about what they have and have not accomplished in relation to the success criteria. Using this strategy to emphasize a strength before pointing to something that needs improvement will put the student in a more receptive state of mind.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher doesn't make corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work.

This strategy allows students to focus on one key skill or concept at a time, rather than be overwhelmed by too much. Especially when the content is new to the students and/or complex, focusing on one thing at a time can help students see revisions as doable.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

You may use a simple, two-part form to provide feedback.

The first part includes the two basic prompts that you fill in as feedback to the student: That's good! and Now this:.

The second part includes two additional prompts, which you leave blank: What I did: and Please notice:.. Students complete these prompts to share how they've used the first part of the form to revise their work.

Tips

Use comments that are nonjudgmental (either positive or negative) toward the learner and speak only to what is and isn't evident in the current work as it relates to the learning target and success criteria.

Three-Minute Teacher Conferences

Description

Students meet with the teacher individually to engage in dialogue about suggestions and comments along with individualized goal setting.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Feedback provides clarity for students about what they have and have not accomplished in relation to the success criteria. In this strategy, the teacher gives feedback verbally rather than in written form. This practice may help ensure that students understand the feedback more accurately, that they do not misinterpret the tone, and that they can ask questions more readily.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher doesn't make corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work.

This strategy feels safe for many learners because the feedback is given in private. Using it regularly for all students can have a positive impact on classroom culture because it sends the message that just because the teacher stops to talk and discuss work with individual students, it doesn't mean that there is necessarily anything wrong.

This strategy allows students to focus on one key skill or concept at a time, rather than be overwhelmed by too much. Especially when the content is very new (without much prior knowledge) and/or complex, focusing on one thing at a time can help students see revisions as doable. Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

You can meet with a few students each day or week depending on specific projects, deadlines, and individual student needs. It is important to set up these conferences in a structured way so both you and student make the best use of the time.

It can be very hard to stick to a tight time frame during these conferences. Having the student do some self assessment before you meet can help.

Tips

Students sharing their self assessment with you may be very valuable because students can easily become less engaged if there is too much teacher talk/guidance.

Helpful hints include the following:

Look at student work beforehand.

Include a checklist or feedback form with the work.

Make comments specific to the work, and elaborate on them during the conference.

Focus on two to three items that need work, and be prepared to share examples on how to improve.

Allot time for student questions and input.

Let students take the feedback form/checklist with them at the end of the conference to use as a reference in making revisions.

In addition, to keep their engagement up, have students summarize what they are going to do at the end of the conference.

Traffic Lighting

Description

The teacher uses differently colored highlighters to provide information to learners about the quality of different parts of their work.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Highlighting in this way confirms for students that they are correct, incorrect, or somewhere in between. This type of feedback alone doesn't provide much information about what to do next, but it encourages students to be more engaged by thinking for themselves about how to improve.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher doesn't make corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work.

Implementation

Use green, yellow, and red (pink) highlighting to indicate to students that Yes, you got it, You are almost there but need to keep working, or No, you don't have it yet. Students can work with a partner to review the traffic-lighted sections or consult with you if they have questions.

Ensure that what the students highlight is directly related to the learning target and success criteria that you clarified for students before beginning the task.

This strategy also is useful for students to mark their own work and that of their peers.

Tips

Be careful to allow students enough time to engage in the work so that they can compare their first efforts with the success criteria themselves, because that engagement and comparison are where the real learning occurs.

On the other hand, make sure that you give the feedback in time for students to adapt their thinking and revise their work, before they have developed habits of practicing incorrectly or are no longer motivated to revise the work. If students have major confusions or are unclear on the success criteria, this feedback may not provide enough guidance on next steps. For those students, you may need to refer them to the success criteria and/or provide more guidance in the form of a conversation or notes.

Two Stars and a Wish

Description

Feedback to students is structured by writing two positive things (Stars) about their work and one thing the writer wishes the students would do to make it stronger (Wish).

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Feedback provides clarity for students about what they have and have not accomplished in relation to the success criteria.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher doesn't make corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work.

This strategy allows students to focus on one key skill or concept at a time, rather than be overwhelmed by too much. Especially when the content is new to the students and/or complex, focusing on one aspect at a time can help students see revisions as doable.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Helping students focus on feedback that is kind, respectful, helpful, and specific is a key to making the feedback manageable and useful.

Implementation

Return work to students with a small form attached that lists two positive things (Stars) about their work and one thing (Wish) you wish the students would do to make it stronger.

Provide solid support, established structures, and time for students to make the most of this opportunity. The comments should be specific to the qualities of the work, designed to promote thinking, and provide clear guidance on how to improve learning.

Tips

Consider creating a simple form that you can quickly fill out and staple to work (or give to the student if work is not written) for the student to use for revision.

Use this same strategy as a form of peer feedback once you have taught its use and students have experienced it.

Strive to ensure that your comments are nonjudgmental (either positive or negative) toward the learner and that they speak only to what is and isn't evident in the current work as it relates to the learning target and success criteria.

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Up/Down Arrows

Description

The teacher marks student work with either an up or a down arrow to indicate how this performance compares with previous assignments.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

This strategy promotes self assessment and encourages students to apply the success criteria to their own work to discover what they have or have not done correctly and to give them ideas about how to move their work to the next level.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher doesn't identify specific mistakes or make the corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work. This feedback informs students that they are correct or incorrect. This alone doesn't provide much information about what to do next, but it encourages students to be more engaged by thinking for themselves about how to improve.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

After a student has revised his or her work once, the student resubmits it to you. If the assignment is better than the last one, draw an up arrow on the paper, and if the assignment is not as good as the last one, use a down arrow.

There should be well-established routines for this kind of marking, so that students can use it formatively to think about their progress and connect it meaningfully with mastery marking.

In the beginning this may be a tricky strategy because quality can be so subjective. It might be most effectively used when you are evaluating the work using the same rubric/criteria as the previous assignment.

Tips

This strategy, while similar to Plus, Minus, Equals, is easier for younger students to understand.

Students who have already mastered the material can work on challenge or enrichment activities while you are providing feedback and others are revising their work.

Know your audience. If the material is too new or challenging, it may be overwhelming for students to have so little information.

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Verso

<http://versolearning.com/>

Description

Described as a feedback tool, this app allows teachers to set up learning using a URL. Space is provided for directions. Students download the app and input their responses to the assignment. They can then post their comments and respond to the comments of others. The teacher can group responses and check engagement levels.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

Verso promotes active engagement through learning conversations, making connections between ideas, using a variety of feedback strategies to clarify and analyze diverse viewpoints and perspectives.

Implementation

The teacher creates an activity that uses a template provided. Each template allows the teacher to provide an introduction, learning objectives, response stems, resources, and to assign a type of feedback or engagement strategy.

Students share what they know, access and process new information and ideas, and respond to the stem. Students are then offered the opportunity to give feedback to others using one of the feedback strategies.

Tips

Teachers can create 5 activities at once with a free account. Only 4 strategies are unlocked in the Toolkit on the free account.

Schools and districts can purchase a subscription allowing the activities and lessons to be shared.

Examples

- Feedback Pairs
- Select and Justify
- Connect the Dots

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Warm and Cool Feedback

Description

Students comment on the positive aspects of a peer’s work, giving warm feedback. When they identify areas that need improvement, they are providing cool feedback. They give hints on how to “raise the temperature” when they offer suggestions about how their peers could improve their work.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

This strategy provides opportunities for students to clarify and build on the ideas of their peers, which helps them clarify their own understanding and develop a respect for the ideas of others.

There is evidence to suggest that students often communicate more effectively with each other than they do with adults, so the person receiving feedback may receive information that is easier for them to act on.

Students giving the feedback gain a deeper understanding of the success criteria by applying them to the work of others.

Implementation

Explain to students the meaning of warm and cool feedback.

Warm feedback:

Highlights the strengths that are specific to the learning targets and success criteria (learning-focused feedback).

Pinpoints what is effective and why. For example: Your introduction caused me to ask questions in my own mind and made me excited to read what happened next. Or Your sequence flows well. I can see how one step leads to another.

Cool feedback:

Includes wonderings, questions, and errors found in the content.

Poses ideas that prompt the writer to think about the content from a different perspective.

Uses possible sentence starters such as I wonder . . . ; What if . . . ; I was confused by . . . ; I’m curious . . . ; Tell me about . . . ; and You might consider . . .

Students pair up and trade work. Give each student time to do the following:

- review his or her peer’s work and compare it with the success criteria
- select two to three areas to provide warm feedback about and two to three areas to provide cool feedback about
- draft what he or she will say during the feedback time with his or her partner (this is especially important when students are new to the process)

The students decide who will go first. As the peer reviewer shares the feedback he or she created, the owner of the work takes notes to use later for revisions. Once the first peer reviewer has finished both warm and cool feedback, the students switch roles.

Tips

Time spent teaching students how to offer suggestions versus providing solutions is helpful in making clear what it means to make suggestions for improvement.

Creating a template with prompts to support both warm and cool feedback may make it easier for students to organize and focus their feedback. Suggesting the use of questions when providing cool feedback might be helpful.

For younger students, encourage the use of oral rather than written feedback for both ease and efficacy.

Use peer feedback only to make improvements, never to contribute to a final grade.

+ / - / = (Plus, Minus, Equals)

Description

The teacher marks student work with + / - / = to indicate how his or her performance compares with that of previous assignments.

Promotes Learning/Informs Learning

This strategy promotes self assessment and encourages students to apply the success criteria to their own work to discover what they have or have not done correctly and to give them ideas about how to move their work to the next level.

This type of feedback, in which the teacher does not identify specific mistakes or make the corrections for learners, encourages students to think deeply and reflect on their work. This feedback informs students that they are correct or incorrect. This alone doesn't provide much information about what to do next, but it encourages students to be more engaged by thinking for themselves about how to improve.

Students have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback, which allows them to address confusions and misconceptions before they become embedded in the students' thinking. Allowing students to revise and resubmit their work also increases their efficacy and ownership in the learning process.

Implementation

After a student has revised his or her work once, the student resubmits it to you. If the latest assignment is of the same quality as the last, give it an "="; if the assignment is better than the last one, give it a "+"; and if the assignment is not as good as the last one, give it a "-."

There should be well-established routines for this kind of marking so that students can use it formatively to think about their progress and connect it meaningfully with mastery marking.

You can modify this technique for younger students by using up and down arrows. In the beginning this may be a tricky strategy because quality can be so subjective. It might be most effectively used when you are evaluating the work using the same rubric/criteria as the previous assignment.

Tips

Students who have already mastered the material can work on challenge or enrichment activities while you are providing feedback and others are revising their work.

Know your audience. If the material is too new or challenging, it may be overwhelming for students to have so little information.

