

Descriptive Feedback Techniques

How can we teach our students to give effective feedback?

- Use student models to show what is expected before having students give peer feedback.
- When modeling how to give effective feedback, show students good and bad examples of feedback.
- Make the criteria for the assignment clear to the students (through the use of a checklist or rubric) and use these criteria as the basis for the feedback. The feedback should always relate back to the learning target(s) or criteria for the assignment.
- Feedback should consist of strengths and areas for improvement.
- Create a class environment where students feel “safe” to offer honest comments.
- Allow students time in class to complete assignments and provide verbal feedback to students as they work.
- When offering feedback on a larger assignment, provide feedback in manageable chunks. Too much feedback is overwhelming to the students.
- Use a catchy phrase, such as “Stars and Stairs”, or “That’s Good...Now This...”
- Post examples of work at different levels in the classroom.

When should students receive descriptive feedback?

- On formative assessments when there is still time to fix the learning.
- When providing students with feedback on summative assessments allow them to correct their answers based on your feedback. You may want to allow students to earn a ½ point back for each answer they correctly fix.
- When the students are working on larger projects, incorporate “check points” for students to receive and provide feedback.
- When it is manageable for the teacher and can be provided in a timely manner.

Suggestions for offering feedback

- Provide feedback to students who are struggling or 20% of the students at a time.
- Give students opportunities to provide peer feedback.
- When there are common misconceptions or errors, provide feedback to the entire class.
- Use STAR to conference with students and/or allow students opportunities in STAR for peer feedback.
- “Ask three before you ask me” - the students should ask three other students in the class for feedback before asking the teacher.
- Allow students time **IN CLASS** to act on the feedback, revise answers, and make corrections.
- Limit your comments – Students should be able to act on the feedback.
- Have students self-assess an assignment by giving one positive or strength, one area for improvement, and one question or comment.
- When students are at different points in the learning, conference individually with students who need it, or conference with small groups of students.
- Don’t grade everything!

