Growth Mindset Feedback:
Saying More than “Good Job!”

Teacher Leader 2018

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Why the Quality of Feedback Matters

“Research has confirmed…providing students with meaningful feedback can greatly enhance learning and improve student achievement.”

5 Research-Based Tips for Providing Students with Meaningful Feedback – Marianne Stenger

Quality of Feedback

The degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation.

-Teachstone

The Importance of Response

A student runs over to their teacher very excited to show the picture they drew.

Acknowledge: Closed Response

“Wow look at that!”

This statement shows that the teacher recognizes what the child has done.

It closes the opportunity for the student to discuss the picture and to grow in knowledge.

Feel-Good Statements

Our goal is to move beyond making statements that merely make students feel good.

Our objective is to encourage students when they’ve done well and find ways to deepen their understanding.
Growth Mindset

- Too often in education responses to students are closed-ended.
- “Good job!” “Great work!” “That’s awesome!”
- These replies are the norm because they sound good.
- Our challenge is to encourage students while adding new information.

Growth Mindset

“In a growth mindset we understand that abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching, and persistence.”
- Carol Dweck

Growth Mindset Feedback

- If we begin to view every interaction with our students as a learning opportunity, then the quality of what we say (our feedback) will improve.

Growth Mindset Feedback

- Pushes us to change our perspective towards response.
- If educators begin to view every interaction with students as an opportunity to impart knowledge, we’ve made a shift in our thinking.

From Closed to Effective Response

http://www.cambridgeschool.org/blog/growth
**Closed to Effective Response**

- Begin by making an observation about what a student has shared with us.
- Ask follow-up questions to gain a better understanding of what the child knows.
- This will allow the teacher to provide new information to add to what the student knows.

**Gaining Knowledge**

In order to bring new information that will deepen understanding we must first find out what students already know.

- Taking the time to find out what our students know is crucial if we want our conversations to be meaningful.
- Asking follow-up questions allows the teacher to gauge the depth of the student’s knowledge about the topic.

**Zone of Proximal Development**

- The child can achieve independently
- The child can achieve with assistance
- What the child will be able to achieve independently
- What the child can currently achieve independently
- Anxiety
- Boredom
- Teacher Support & Scaffolding

**Quality Feedback**

Student: Look at my picture!
Teacher: Your picture is beautiful. Tell me what you made.
Student: It’s a bear.
Teacher: A bear, what do you like about bears?
Student: They like honey, I like sweet stuff too.
Teacher: Did you know bears are omnivores? This means that besides honey they also eat fruits, vegetables, and meat.

**What Quality Feedback Does**

- Teachers keep children thinking.
- Children continue to learn.
- Learning is promoted it doesn’t feel like they are being pushed.
- Encourages children to learn more.

Quality of Feedback: The Hows and Whys – Teachstone eBook
Growth Opportunities

- Students sharing their success occurs repeatedly throughout the school day.
- Effort must be put forth to value and take advantage of one on one learning opportunities.

Deposit Knowledge

- A trip to the bank to make a deposit is beneficial.
- Our feedback can be thought of as deposits.
- Developing a habit of making responses meaningful by adding new information, adds to our student's bank of knowledge.

Meaningful Feedback

- Deposits in knowledge.
- Students improve in their abilities to express themselves.
- Create a generation of students who enjoy thinking and learning.

Growth Mindset Feedback

- “You’re working so hard on this puzzle.”
- “I see you have just a few more pieces.”
- “Which piece do you think you should try next?”

Detailed Feedback Vs. Feel Good Statements

- “I like the way you placed the book back on the shelf with the cover facing forward.”
  - When our feedback is specific, the student knows what they did well.
  - Students will repeat desired behaviors if we encourage them when they do it.
- “Great job Brian!”
  - Quick praise statements make students smile.
  - Do they know why they’re receiving the compliment?
  - What are the chances of Brian repeating the desired behavior?
Improving Feedback

When educators are informed on how to make their feedback better, the frequency of quick praise phrases decreases.

Components of Quality Feedback: Scaffolding

Give Hints

“We’re thinking about fruits that do not grow on trees. The fruit I’m thinking about grows in a bunch on a vine. Their shape is similar to tiny balls.”

Components of Quality Feedback: Feedback Loops

Good feedback builds on what has been said by providing additional information on the topic.

Feedback Loops

Student: “Look I built a castle!”
Teacher: “You built a beautiful castle. Did you know that people who live in castles are called royal?”

Student: “Royal?”
Teacher: “Yes royal. Can you think of a movie where people lived in a castle?”

Feedback Loops

Student: “Yes in Frozen, Anna and Elsa lived in a castle.”
Teacher: “You’re right they did live in a castle. Do you remember what Elsa and Anna were called since their parents were the king and queen?”

Student: “Yeah, they were called princesses.”
Teacher: “So a king, queen, and a princess are are considered royal.”

Deepen Understanding

- Build on what students know and keep it relevant to them.
- This allows the child to stay on topic in a way that’s interesting to them.
Components of Quality Feedback: Prompting thought Process

- Teachers ask why questions so students can explain their thinking.
- When students explain why or how they did something, they begin to understand the process of learning.
- Teachers can also correct misunderstandings the students may have as they’re explaining their thoughts.

Prompting thought Process

- If a teacher is focusing on addition, she could say:
  - Who can tell me the steps they would take to find out what is four more than seven?
  - We want students to arrive at the correct answer. Even more important is knowing how to solve the problem.

Prompting thought Process

- Giving students the opportunity to explain their thinking builds self-confidence.
- It also allows other students to be exposed to different ways to solve problems.
- Hearing the thought process of others and being able to explain your own thought process is an important part of cognitive development.

Components of Quality Feedback: Providing Information

“Information provided to students should expand and clarify students’ understanding or actions.”

Classroom Assessment Scoring System – Pre-K (2008)

Components of Quality Feedback: Encouragement and Affirmation

The teacher recognizes student effort and encourages persistence by getting students to try new strategies.
Components of Quality Feedback: Encouragement and Affirmation

“ I see you’re having a hard time with this one. You’re so close, don’t give up. Maybe you could try....”

Components of Quality Feedback

- Scaffolding
- Feedback Loops
- Promoting Thought Process
- Providing Information
- Encouragement and Affirmation

Contingent Responding

- A contingent response is one that is directly related to a comment.
- A conversation takes place simply by responding to or adding information to what has been said.

Contingent Responding

Child: “I helped Daddy cook dinner last night.”
Teacher: “You did? What did you guys make?”
Child: “We made spaghetti.”
Teacher: “Spaghetti, That’s one of my favorites! Tell me how you helped?”

Providing Fuel

- Our views about how and why we give feedback is changing.
- We can now think about giving feedback to starting a fire.

Providing Fuel

- To keep a fire going, you need fuel.
- Adding new information to what students keeps the fire going by deepening understanding.
- Asking follow-up questions pushes students to explain their thinking.
Extinguishing or Igniting the Fire

Feel-Good Statements:
- Quick praise phrases smother learning opportunities.
- Opportunities to expand on what students know are missed.

Growth mindset Feedback:
- Sparks the learning process.
- Keeps students thinking.
- Encourages students to persist.
- Allows students to explain their thinking.

Initiating Feedback
- Make observations about what you see students doing.
- Encourage students to persist when having difficulty.

Growth Mindset Feedback
Before you provide feedback ask yourself:
- Is this comment pushing students to continue to think?
- Am I providing new information?
- Will this comment help me to find out the student’s zone of proximal development?

Questions?

REFERENCES

Quality of Feedback: The Hows and Whys. Teachstone eBook


