

Giving Effective Student Feedback

Feedback ensures that we move forward efficiently and enhance our knowledge, skills, abilities and relationship with others. The best feedback is specific, actionable, timely and respectful.

Specific

Rather than providing general comments, give feedback that will provide tools for improvement. What exactly worked or requires improvement?

Focus feedback on 2-3 specific items. For example, ask yourself: If this presenter could only change one thing next time they presented, what one change would make the most significant improvement? What two specific changes would improve this piece of written work?

Actionable

Focus on future improvement by offering the student concrete suggestions, emphasizing what could be done next time (vs. what they did “wrong” this time).

Timely

Effective feedback is immediate and frequent; it is specifically tied to the event being evaluated and given often.

Respectful

Make an effort to look for the good. Identifying and communicating a student’s demonstrated strengths is integral to building that student’s belief in their own abilities, which will support their persistence, engagement, and learning.

Ensure that your comments are positive and non-judgmental. Rephrase and restate comments that would include “You” to “I-statements”; for example, changing the statement, “You did not demonstrate the relationship between X and Y.” to “I did not understand the relationship between X and Y.”

Focus on the product, rather than on the personal attributes of the presenter.

References

Sadler, I. (2013). The role of self-confidence in learning to teach in higher education. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 50(2), 157-166. doi: 10.1080/14703297.2012.760777

