Feedback Basics

FEEDBACK
FOCUS

What is effective feedback?

Effective feedback is an essential component of the learning process. More than information that teachers *give* students about their work, effective feedback is part of an iterative and responsive process where students both learn and develop skills and mindsets. As partners in the feedback process, they enter the learning process more deeply: they reflect, evaluate their work, understanding, and skills, communicate with peers and teachers, and practice a growth mindset. Explore more with our Feedback Fundamentals Grab-and-Go Session.

Characteristics of effective feedback

The nature of feedback provided to students greatly influences how effective it is at helping students learn and move forward. Effective feedback is:

- specific
- focused on improvement
- encourages self-assessment
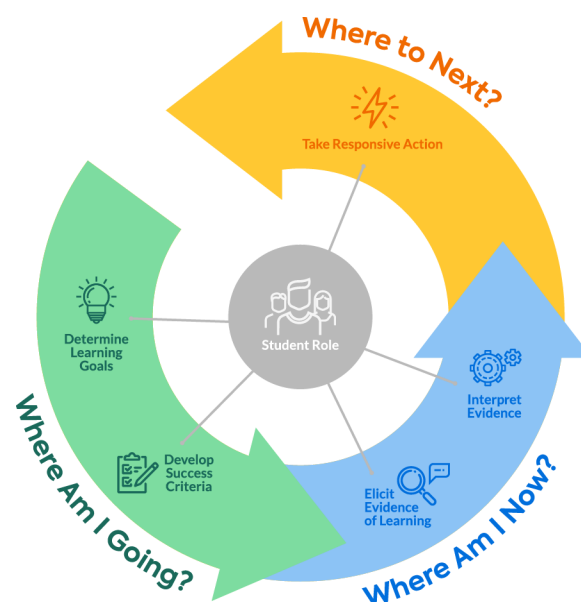- encourages a growth mindset
- actionable
- timely

What does effective feedback look and sound like? Take a closer look with our "Better Feedback" activities for Math, Science, Social Science and English.

What is the feedback cycle?

The feedback cycle helps students to understand where they are going, where they are, and where they need to go, so they can take responsive action. Students should ask and answer three questions as they work towards a learning or skill goal:

1. Where am I going?
2. Where am I now?
3. Where to next? (and, how will I get there?)

During feedback cycles, teachers and students work together to set goals, elicit evidence of progress and interpret that evidence, so students can take responsive action and move forward.

Opportunity Education

What does the feedback cycle look like in a classroom?

Determine Learning Goals | Develop Success Criteria

Elicit Evidence of Learning | Interpret Evidence

Take Responsive Action

Where am I going?

Where am I now?

Where to next?

A teacher wants to give his students feedback that will improve their preparation for class each day.

He **establishes** and shares three **criteria** for full preparation: home learning completed, class text brought to class, and on-time arrival. He also shares a simple 3 point scale: unprepared, somewhat prepared, prepared.

Students become familiar with the criteria and and **how they can be successful**. They understand what is expected of them.

For three weeks, he circulates around the room during the warm-up, recording feedback on a clipboard.

After consistently **eliciting evidence**, he conducts brief check-ins with students. He compares each student's evidence of preparation with recent formative assessments.

He asks them to reflect on how their preparation might be affecting their success in class. He also asks students to reflect on any obstacles. He works with students to **interpret the evidence.**

Together, they collaborate on steps, routines, or strategies the student could employ to come to class prepared.

They also collaborate and trouble-shoot any obstacles for preparation, such as difficulty completing home learning, loss of books or supplies, etc.

Students leave with a plan to take **responsive action** and move forward with the feedback.

How can students become active participants in the feedback cycle?

Students learn best when they are active participants in the feedback cycle. When students act as partners in this way, they…

1. take ownership of their learning goals, (Where am I going?)
2. self-assess the progress they are making, (Where am I now?)
3. and identify the steps they need to take to move forward. (Where to next?)

The following strategies can help you engage students as active participants in the feedback cycle:

- Help students evaluate their mindsets and develop a growth mindset

- Co-create success criteria with students

- Co-create rubrics with student input

- Use exemplars to demonstrate to students what mastery looks like

- Allow opportunities for self-assessment and self-reflection

- Build in opportunities for students to give and receive peer feedback

Planning for effective feedback routines

Effective lesson planning begins with backwards design, whether you are planning a single project or an entire unit. Oftentimes, planning is focused on instructional methods. Feedback is sometimes left out of this planning process. **However, planning for the entire feedback loop is just as important as planning individual activities or projects. Feedback for and as learning (formative feedback) is, in its own right, a learning experience.**
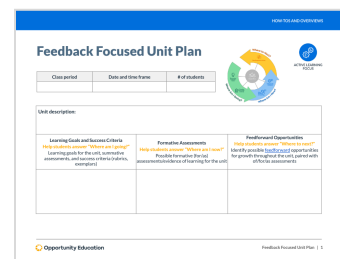
Prioritizing feedback means actively planning for it. The following resources can help you plan for effective feedback:

Of/For/As Learning Infographic
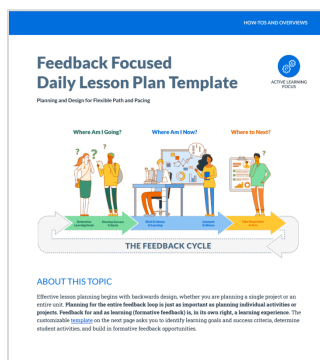
Feedback Focused Daily Lesson Plan Template

Feedback Focused Unit Plan Template