

HELPING STUDENTS GIVE AND RECEIVE FEEDBACK

Upper Elementary – High School



1. **Begin a routine of ongoing informal opportunities** for students to give and receive feedback by asking them to check in with a friend *before* determining whether a piece of work is finished. Involve students in creating a rubric or guidelines to inform the feedback. Feedback should be guided by three rules: “Be specific. Be helpful. Be kind.” (as well as “You don’t have to follow the advice.”).

If the work is intended to be more creative or expressive, possible questions include:

- What parts of the work are you feeling really good about?
- Where in this work do you think you’re meeting your teacher’s goals for this work?
Where do you feel you’re meeting your personal goals for this work?
- How (if at all) does this work matter to you personally?
- What does this work demonstrate that you’re learning or that you know and understand?

If the work is more analytical or problem-solving in nature, helpful sentence starters include:

- This work seems finished to me because ____.
- One thing I think our teacher will think is really good is ____.
- One thing I think is really good is ____.

- One thing I think you should look over again or work on a little more is _____ because _____.
- OR Here's a place where I think you could improve this a little by _____.
- One thing about your work that is really interesting or helpful to me is _____.

2. **Hold structured critique sessions.** Look at unfinished work in whole or small groups (small groups may be easier; ask students to choose a couple of friends to look at one another's work together). Two ways to begin the conversation are:

1. Ask students to explain where the work is "coming from." If the work is in response to a particular assignment, students might name what standards or learning goals the work is supposed to demonstrate or what they think the teacher is looking for. If the work is purely student-generated (students have created all the goals for the work), students can identify what *they* were hoping to achieve. In either case, students should begin by commenting on their own work and identifying particular things they would like feedback on. Adults can participate in the conversation and model helpful feedback.
2. Ask the group:
 - Look carefully at the work with a focus on *describing*, not judging or interpreting. (What do you see in this drawing? What do you notice about this essay?) If students do make a judgment or interpretation, ask what in the work makes them say that.
 - What questions do you have for the creator of the work? (Why did the artist put blue on the face? How is the writer supporting his or her claim?)
 - What suggestions do you have for what to do next? (What might help the drawing be more realistic? What might make the essay stronger? Is there something in someone else's work that you wish _____ had included in his or her own?)

Record or transcribe part of the conversation and bring it to the next meeting (1-1 ½ pages is plenty!) as a way to discuss how to make feedback sessions more effective.

3. **Post comments in the classroom** made by students and adults as a reference for all to support learning with and from one another. For example,

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| ○ I was inspired by... | ○ What if... |
| ○ Maybe... | ○ I wonder... |
| ○ I notice... | ○ How could you... |
| ○ Another way you could do it is... | ○ I could... |