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# Reaching the Struggling Writer: Effective Feedback Strategies

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# Feedback and Feed Forward

# Feedback Overview

- Increasing body of evidence has shown that feedback is ineffective in helping students learn.
- Instructors think their feedback is better than students do.
- Students view feedback as difficult to understand, terse one-way comments.
- One way feedback is ineffective.
- Student role in feedback needs enhancement
- New view of feedback: Dialogue that supports learning in formal and informal settings, not merely information transmission.
- Source: Carless, D., Salter, D. Yang, M., and Lam, J. (2011). Developing sustainable feedback practices. *Studies in Higher Education*, 36 (4). Pp. 395-407.

# Student Perceptions of Feedback

- Timely feedback from professors is one of the top challenges students face.
- Expect feedback will tell them what they did right and wrong, and will help improve performance
- Immediacy of feedback is important to student satisfaction.
- Students do not like general information, or impersonal feedback that does not pertain to future assignments.
- View a grade as useful feedback.
- Think grammar and spelling should be included in feedback
- Appreciate critical comments that help reach desired level of performance
- Over half of students do not question grades
- Source: Jones, I. & Blankenship, D. (August, 2014). What do you mean you never got any feedback? *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 24, pp. 1-9.

# What Students Want from Feedback

- Students identify timely feedback as a top challenge in their classes
  - Many students view feedback in terms of being given a number or letter grade, along with some comments for their performance on an assignment.
- Feedback needs to be a two-way process involving the instructor and student.
- Should be positive and constructive, building confidence.
- Students prefer explicit expectations and gentle guidance.
- Finally, they want feedback to be timely and useful in the future.
- Students want feedback that tells them if they are on target and that will show them how to improve their performance.
  - This is feeding forward.
- Source: Jones, I. & Blankenship, D. (August, 2014). What do you mean you never got any feedback? *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 24, pp. 1-9.

# Dialogic Feedback

- Interactive exchange, where interpretations are shared
- Meaning is negotiated.
- Expectations are clarified.
- Supports and informs the student on the current task, but also helps develop the ability in students to self-regulate performance on future assignments.
- Use of technology-assisted feedback (online dialogues), promotes sharing.
- Feedback should be a scaffolding technique, designed to help students become more independent learners.
- Source: Crimmins, G., Nash, G., Oprescu, F., Liebergreen, M., Turley, J., Bond, R., & Dayton, J. (2016). A written, reflective and dialogic strategy for assessment feedback that can enhance student/teacher relationships. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 41(1), pp. 141-153.

# Writing Strategies





# Cognitive Strategy Instruction in Writing (CSIW)

- Provides students with strategies related to each facet of writing.
- Tailored instruction to reach the struggling student
- CSIW may be used in specialized classes with low writing abilities and regular classes with higher writing abilities
- Englert, C. S., Raphael, T. E., Anderson, L. M., Anthony, H. M., & Steven, D. D. (1991). Making strategies and self-talk visible: Writing instruction in regular and special education classrooms. *American Educational Research Journal*, 28, 337-372.



# Strategies of CSIW

## POWER

- Plan
- Organize
- Write
- Edit
- Revise



# Self Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)

- Combines Academic Strategies with Self- Regulation Procedures
- Goal Setting
- Self-Instruction
- Self-Monitoring
- Self-Reinforcement
- Source: Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (2005). *Writing better. Effective strategies for teaching students with learning difficulties.* Baltimore: Paul. H. Brookes Publishing Co.



# Four Stages of Modified CSIW/SRSD

1. Text instruction – tools and text analysis skills for understanding problem/solution
2. Modeling – Teachers model the entire process of writing by showing students POWER
3. Guided Practice – Teachers relinquish control of writing strategies and offer feedback
4. Independence- Students work independently to master criterion.



# Text/Tools Instruction

- Online setting-introductory research course
  - Assignment pertained to how to analyze qualitative data: develop codes categories.
  - We provided students the manual and videos on how to use MAXQDA .
  - Also, listed detailed instruction, but there was no direct teaching involved.
- Ground Setting-mid-level qualitative research course
  - Gave live demonstration of how to download MAXQDA and how to upload transcribed data into the software system.
  - Also, librarian came into class and showed students how to do research for empirical articles.



# Modeling

- Online setting-introductory research course
  - MAXQDA assignment: gave the class a prompt to encourage understanding of codes/categories  
We need to triangulate or look for commonalities across these sources of data. If you had to look at all of these words and group them into three categories, what would those three categories be?  
One I would start with would be:
  - Emotions: negative, neutral, positive, unclear, ambivalent, sadness, happiness, success, failure...This would cover most of the assessments and story reflections.
  - What other two would you add?
- Ground Setting-mid-level qualitative research course
  - We demonstrated how to code transcribed data and look for themes.



# Guided Practice

- Online setting-introductory research course
  - Held a Zoom meeting with students who wanted to practice how to code data and look for themes before the week 6 assignment was due. Also provided additional information in the discussion forum as well as individual forum if students had questions as they were completing the assignment.
- Ground Setting-mid-level qualitative research course
  - Once modeling of how to code data and themes took place, transcribed data was provided to the class and had students hand code data while in class.



# Independence

- Online setting-introductory research course
  - MAXQDA assignment has four points students have to complete from posting specific screenshots related to the coded data, to coming up with categories and sub codes which they were able to do independently.
- Ground Setting-mid-level qualitative research course
  - Students completed the “completing a Qualitative Study” assignment independently where they had to identify themes in the text and how to write memo’s within MAXQDA.



# Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

# Types of Assessment

- **Assessment:** all activities used by teacher to diagnostically alter teaching and learning-teacher observation, classroom discussion, and analysis of student work and summative tests(William & Black, 1998).
  - Ex. Having students submit one or two sentences on identifying a main point of the lecture.
- **Formative Assessment:** information is used to adapt teaching and learning to meet student needs. Such as re-teaching, trying alternative instructional approaches, or offering more opportunities for practice (William & Black, 1998).
  - Ex. Assigning final exam grade
- **Summative Assessment:** students are evaluated at the end of an instructional unit against a benchmark or standard.
  - Ex. Midterm, final exam, major paper, etc.

# Formative vs Summative Assessment (Smith, 2018)

<b>Formative-process</b>	<b>Summative-single measure</b>
Prospective-during instruction	Retroactive-after instruction
Assessment for learning & comprehension	Assessment of learning at the end of unit or lesson
Descriptive feedback-targets students strengths/weaknesses	Evaluative feedback-measures mastery after instruction
Feedback central focus-addresses issues immediately	Periodic-tests or quizzes, little feedback
Continuous-used to adjust teaching	End of instruction-evaluates learning
Informal-teacher & student	Formal-teacher
High impact on learning	Limited impact on learning
Guides instruction-does not affect grade	Diagnostic assessment-used to calculate grade

# Classroom Assessment Techniques

- **Directed Paraphrasing** –assesses skill in application and writing.
- **What:** students are asked to paraphrase in writing, a part of the lesson for a specific audience.
- **Why:**
  - allows faculty to examine student understanding of information
  - check students ability to transform thought into meaningful expression
  - in scholarly writing this is essential since students continue to write for a generic audience
  - **Ex.** Have your students paraphrase your lecture on photosynthesis for your teacher versus your classmate. Ask them, how would these differ? Share with class.

# CATs continued

- **Application exercise-** assesses skills in application and writing
- **What:** after the introduction of a concept, principle, generalization, theory or procedure, students are asked to write down at least one real world application.
- **Why:**
  - students are forced to link new knowledge with prior knowledge
  - good opportunity to discuss patterns that require assistance with the class
  - teachers get an immediate idea of what the students have grasped
    - **Ex.** How to take data and convert it into useful information.

# CATS for Hybrid Classrooms

- **Online classes:**

- ideas can be shared in the main forum (classroom/discussion)
- there is no anonymity, so instructor might invite direct submissions
- have students submit in partners or groups
- submit to the instructor who removes identifiers and shares with class
- Ex. What did you learn from this lecture that you

- **Traditional classes:**

- students can submit their “Minute Papers” without names
- anonymous submissions are graded by the students, state what is missing
- groups can share information-listeners provide feedback to presenters
- instructor notes areas requiring teaching adjustments.
- Ex. Write your understanding of \_\_\_\_\_. Submit w/o name.

# Activity for Participants

# Effective Feedback

## Strategies for Success



# Guidelines for Effective Feedback

- Focus on the key knowledge and skills learners should acquire as a result of engaging in a learning episode and assignment.
- Feedback should be timely and provided frequently enough so that learners will be likely to use it.
- Feedback should be linked to future practice opportunities.
- Show learners what you *do* want.
  - Provide examples or anchor assignments
- Show learners what you do *not* want.
- Look for patterns of errors in student work to inform class level feedback.
- Prioritize feedback by thinking about what information will be of most use to students at this one particular point in time.
- Raise awareness of how feedback will change over a course .

# Guidelines for Effective Feedback

- Be conscious of how feedback is given.
  - Balance comments between strengths and weaknesses
  - Positive feedback is delivered in a constructive manner and encourages learning
  - Negative feedback is not constructive, may shame and blame and may make the learner feel inadequate or undervalued (Rosa & Santos, 2016)
- Ask students to show how they used feedback in future assignments. Have students go into their comments and prioritize comments or make a feedback action list in order of priority.
- Source: Macquire, G. & Gilbert, F. (July 2013). From a reflective audit of assessment feedback practices emerges a framework for paving the way for feedback. *Brookes ejournal of learning and teaching*. 5(2).

# Four-Step Model for Feedback

- Congratulate the student on what they did well.
  - Liberally commend the students on successful elements in the assignment.
  - For less-than-admirable assignments, you can still congratulate the student for their continued efforts in the class. Focus on what they did.
- Discuss areas in which the student can grow.
  - Point areas that need attention.
- Discuss how the student can improve. Give specific examples and share resources that show them *how* to improve.
- End with a positive comment. Students want to know you value them and their work, even if their grade is lower than they had hoped.

# Reflective Feedback

- Include a reflective component in feedback:
  - Have students write a reflective statement that outlines areas of feedback they received previously and have worked on for the current assignment.
  - Develop an action plan of items to address in preparation for the next assignment.

# How reflective/engaging is your feedback?

1. Do you sit with or meet with students to discuss feedback (how does my body language impact my message and student receipt of that message?)
2. Do you point out problems objectively? Do you make things personal or look at the big picture?
3. Are you ready to listen, ask questions and recognize you may not know the whole issue?
4. Can you hold students accountable without shaming them?
5. Are you willing to do your part? Accept responsibility for lacking feedback?
6. Do you thank students for their efforts rather than criticizing their failings?
7. Can you present feedback in a way that allows students to grow?
8. Can you model vulnerability and openness? Walk the talk?
9. Are you willing to grow?
10. Do you offer specific comments that will show students exactly how to move forward?

Adapted from: Rosa, W., & Santos, S. (2016). Introduction of the engaged feedback reflective inventory during a preceptor training program. *Journal for Nurses in Professional Development*, 12 (4).pp., E1-E7.



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