

AER GAINS Video Series – *Descriptive Feedback* Transcript

Segment 1 - *Feedback - The Most Powerful Tool* (6:56)

Narrator:

Feedback is information students and teachers share during learning so that students can close the gap between their current level of performance and the learning goals. Feedback engages teachers and students collaboratively in learning, where students and teachers are continuously giving and receiving meaningful feedback about learning.

This video shows teachers learning about feedback; what it is, what makes it effective, and how providing feedback during learning helps students reach their learning goals.

The practice of providing feedback to students has been highly investigated in educational research. Black and Wiliam, in their landmark study on formative assessment, state that “descriptive feedback is the most powerful tool for improving student learning” (2003).

The way teachers provide feedback to students determines how effectively the feedback can be used by students to improve. When teachers provide feedback to students about what they are doing well, what they need to improve, and how to improve, student achievement improves significantly.

Has this ever happened to you? You’ve designed a task to assess student’s learning; spent time grading their work and writing comments to guide student’s improvement. When you return this work, your students focus entirely on their grades and pay little or no attention to your comments. Some calculate their percentage; others immediately want to compare their grades to see how others have done; and still others wish to keep their achievement confidential.

T: I notice often times kids get essays back and they don’t even read my comments. And look, I spent an hour on these comments, why aren’t you reading them? But now because they are learning that those comments directly go to what they are going to do to succeed, they actually read them...and that’s a good feeling.

Research tells us that frequent evaluation and grading can have a negative impact on students’ motivation to learn. Using assessment for learning has been shown to increase student engagement in the learning process.

T: They’re, I think, a little bit hesitant when they realized they weren’t getting marked on everything, um, but seeing the final results, I mean my students did fabulous on the measurement unit, they really, really did well so I think seeing those final results is helping them to realize that this is a process and that we have to go through this process in order to get the results that they wanted.

*There is conclusive evidence to show that when students receive specific, timely, descriptive feedback, their achievement does in fact improve. Descriptive feedback helps the learner answer the questions; **where am I going, where am I now, and how can I close the gap?***

When teachers are involved in assessment for learning, they:

- *share their learning goals and success criteria with their students*
- *use questions to determine what students are thinking*
- *provide meaningful feedback during the learning*

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- *and engage students in peer and self assessment.*

These practices work together in an integrated fashion to help students learn and improve.

While viewing this video, you may wish to reflect on the following questions:

- *Do you give your students clear, concise feedback related to the learning goals?*

T: OK, that's fair. So you've got some good org[anization] going on here. You start with sort of an overall statement which is who he is, he's the chairman, and you go into all your specific characteristics, making sure that you have at least three (which you do). And then you're going to talk about why those characteristics would make him come for a romantic dinner with his wife, or for a business dinner with his colleagues, right?

- *Do you identify what they have done well, and what needs improvement?*

T: OK Patricia, I've had a chance to look at your work and you've done a lot of things well. There's good detail in here, good description, talking about specifically like what his education is, talking about character words like "generous". These are all really good words that I'm glad you took the time to include. What I would like to work on improving is talking about why characteristics like being married would draw him to a place like *Luxury*.

- *Does your feedback include how they can improve?*

T: So what do you think we could take out of this silhouette to make it more focussed to your restaurant?

S: The fact that she has red curly hair and black stilettos.

T: OK good, so why doesn't that...

S: Because it's describing, it's again describing her. It's not really describing the restaurant.

T: OK that's very good. So we'll modify your silhouette to remove details that don't connect to your restaurant. What I want you to do is to connect the details that you have in this to the type of restaurant, the atmosphere of your restaurant.

- *Are your students expected to act on your feedback?*

T: So I'm going to give you some time now Patricia to go over these suggestions and this feedback in our discussion and actually put it into place.

- *Do you provide the necessary time for them to act on the feedback?*

T: Take some time, look through the feedback, read through my notes and take some time - maybe 15 minutes or so - to start putting that feedback into place and improving the next draft of your profile or monologue.

- *Do you follow up on how students have responded to your feedback?*

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T: OK Hiva, I've provided you with some suggestions on how you could improve your responses to me. Have you had an opportunity to look at what I've written?

In this video, you will learn how to;

- 1. provide effective, descriptive feedback*
- 2. relate feedback to learning goals and success criteria*
- 3. plan opportunities for providing and acting on feedback*
- 4. increasingly engage students in their learning*

A viewer's guide has been developed to enhance your professional learning while viewing this video. You might begin by reflecting on your current feedback practice by using the feedback inventory provided in the viewer's guide.

Quote on screen: The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback. (Hattie, 1992)