Purposeful Feedback Module Outline

Purpose
- This module explores descriptive purposeful feedback and its use as a strategy for differentiation and as a formative assessment tool.

Goal
- The goal of this module is for teachers, assessors, and evaluators to better implement and understand the use of effective feedback techniques to move student understanding forward in any given subject area.

Objectives
- After completing the entire module and reviewing the accompanying activities, you should be able to:
  - Describe what effective purposeful feedback is and what it is not.
  - Identify strategies and tools that augment effective purposeful feedback.
  - Identify how to set goals, monitor instruction, and adjust instruction based on providing effective purposeful feedback.
  - Understand how to implement effective feedback strategies to determine the necessary skills the learner needs for ongoing success in learning outcomes.

Alignment to Standards
- The goals and objectives of this module are designed to provide the user the understanding and knowledge to utilize the research-based highly effective strategy "purposeful descriptive feedback" for increasing student outcomes.

Challenge
- Video: Ms. McTeejay, a middle school language arts teacher, has been working on literary analysis with her 8th grade students. While students are working, she monitors their progress and notes there are areas that could be improved. She occasionally stops to encourage the students by saying, "good job," "great work," or "nice illustration." After reviewing the students' completed assignments, Ms. McTeejay is surprised by the quality of work submitted by her gifted students, even after they have had a chance to self-assess and make changes. She wants to ensure her students understand what they did well and what they still need to improve upon, and she wonders how she can provide the most effective feedback to get them moving in the right direction.

Initial Thoughts
- What should Ms. McTeejay know in order to provide effective feedback to her 8th grade students?
- What could Ms. McTeejay do to help her students better understand where they are, where they are going, and what they need to do to get there?
- Four characteristics of good feedback.
  - Specific: Feedback is a tool for future change.

- Actionable: Emphasize what could be done differently next time versus what was done "wrong" this time.
- Timely: The most effective feedback is immediate and frequent.
- Respectful: Look for the good while still focusing on future solutions.
  "You did not demonstrate the relationship between X and Y" becomes "I did not understand the relationship between X and Y."

Perspectives & Resources
- Feedback should be used as a basis for improvement.
  Feedback is an essential component of effective change, and therefore improvement, and one of the roles of an educator is to seek to improve things.
- Feedback facilitates the understanding of:
  - What we can change to get better results
  - The rate of progress towards a goal
  - What needs to happen to improve relationships
  - Whether something is worth doing
  - How well we are doing
  - What others think of us or how they value us
  - Our level of performance against a target
- Video: Austin's Butterfly- Ron Berger from Expeditionary Learning demonstrates the transformational power of models, critique, and descriptive feedback to improve student work. Here he tells the story of the transformation of Austin's Butterfly.
- Bandura and Cervone's 1983 study of groups of cyclists illustrates just how important the giving of helpful feedback is to the development of individuals and the wider team.
- Link: Making Feedback Count by Cambridge Education
- Quiz: What's your Feedback Style? (Cambridge Education)

❖ Page 1: Descriptive Feedback-An Overview
- Descriptive feedback is specific information, in the form of written comments or verbal conversations, that help the learner understand what she or he needs to do in order to improve.
- It is critical to understand how specific, descriptive feedback supports learning.
- It is important to be able to identify what makes effective feedback.
- There are practical strategies to plan for providing effective feedback.

❖ Page 2: Feedback-The Most Powerful Tool
- AER Video Library Segment 1: Feedback-The Most Powerful Tool. This video discusses how feedback impacts student learning and motivation to learn.
- Teachers use feedback as assessment for student learning.
- It is important to reflect on your current style and level of feedback practices to determine areas to improve.

❖ **Page 3: What Constitutes Effective Feedback?**
- AER Video Library Segment 2: What Constitutes Effective Feedback? This video discusses how not all feedback supports student learning. This segment provides information about what makes feedback effective.
- Structure feedback to identify what was done well, what needs improvement, and how to improve.
- Effective feedback should relate to the learning goals and success criteria identified for the task.
- Provide descriptive rather that evaluative feedback: Effective feedback provides students with detailed, specific information about improving their learning.
- Consider the amount of feedback: Prioritize feedback to address the most important needs first.
- Limit to 2-3 specific recommendations linked to the learning goal(s).

❖ **Page 4: Effective Feedback Requires Purposeful Planning**
- AER Video Library Segment 3: Effective Feedback Requires Purposeful Planning. This video discusses how not all feedback supports student learning. This segment provides information about what makes feedback effective.
- In the video, a graphic representation (The Feedback Loop) shows the role of feedback in the learning process, and how it is used by the teacher and the learner.
- Planning assessment and instruction concurrently: When planning, teachers design the learning experiences to address the learning goals.
- Choosing to provide oral or written feedback depends on a number of factors.
  - Oral feedback can be highly effective because it can be provided easily in the "teachable moment" and in a timely way.
  - Written feedback provides students with a record of what they are doing well, what needs improvement, and suggested next steps.
- Balancing feedback, classroom assessment, and instruction can be a time-consuming commitment.
  - Provide feedback at critical points during the learning.
  - Model providing feedback for students to help them become better able to peer- and self-assess.
  - Provide feedback to groups of students with similar strengths and needs
  - Design a way to record the feedback for reference by students and for your own records.
  - Maximize the use of classroom observation and feedback logs.
- It is critically important that teachers model feedback, and explicitly teach students how to provide effective feedback to each other (peer assessment) and themselves (self-assessment).

❖ **Page 5: Connecting to Learning Goals and Success Criteria**
- AER Video Library Segment 5: Connecting to Learning Goals and Success Criteria. This video discusses how students may gain a clear understanding of the learning goals and the success criteria.

- Planning assessment and instruction: This video demonstrates an approach to planning called "backward design." Based on the concept of planning backwards from the desired results, this approach consists of three stages that help teachers plan assessment and instruction in an integrated way.
- The teachers plan how they will gather evidence of student learning, as well as what criteria they will use to determine how well students have learned.
- Teachers can use a variety of approaches to help students understand the success criteria:
  - asking students questions about their understanding
  - encouraging students to ask questions
  - providing students examples of strong and weak work
  - collaboratively developing the criteria with students
- Both the teacher's feedback to the student and the student's self-assessment are clearly connected to the success criteria.
- Teachers select and sequence the learning experiences (instruction) integrated with opportunities to gather information about the learning (assessment).
- At the teacher determined *checkpoints,* students receive feedback from the teacher, from peers, and from themselves (through self-assessment), and use the feedback to take further action to learn and improve.

❖ **Page 6: Using Feedback to Develop Students' Self-Assessment Skills**
- AER Video Library Segment 6: Using Feedback to Develop Students' Self-Assessment Skills. This video discusses how teachers use feedback to help students to develop self-assessment skills and become independent learners.
- The role of effective feedback is to increase the student's ability to identify what is being done well, what needs to improve, and how to improve is critical to self-assessment.
- To help students become skilled at self-assessment, teachers can:
  - Explicitly identify, share, and clarify learning goals and success criteria
  - Model the application of criteria using samples
  - Provide guided opportunities to peer- and self-assess
  - Provide students feedback on the quality of their peer- and self-assessments
  - Teach students how to use feedback to determine next steps and set goals (Adapted from Rolheiser & Ross, 2000)
- Feedback to help students become more independent learners.
- Clips are provided to show teachers using feedback and other assessment for learning practices to develop students' ability to monitor and improve their learning.
  - Modeling descriptive feedback and the assessment process.
  - Looking at exemplars of work together.
  - Developing and using self-assessment tools, (e.g., templates and checklists)
  - Having students peer assess and discussing what and how to improve.
  - Having students use strategies to self-assess their work, (e.g., traffic lighting, targeting or thumbs up).
  - Encouraging students to act on feedback for homework with home support.

▪ Having students maintain a feedback or learning log to monitor progress.
▪ Asking students to complete an exit card at the end of a lesson.

❖ **Page 7: Additional Resources**
  • John Hattie Links to Resources
      ▪ Visible Learning
      ▪ Visible Learning Plus: Professor John Hattie, Osiris Educational
      ▪ John Hattie, Learning Intentions & Success Criteria
      ▪ 8 Strategies Robert Marzano & John Hattie Agree On
      ▪ "The Power of Feedback" - Hattie & Timperley
  • EduGAINS/AER Video Library resources and links
  • HighScope Extensions: Why Saying "Good Job!" Is Not Good Practice
  • Class Teaching, a Wordpress site resource: "Feedback Matters"
  • The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)**:**
    Five Principles for Formative Assessments that Fuel Feedback
    "7 Things to Remember About Feedback"
  • The Australian Society for Evidence Based Teaching: "Boost Student Results With Feedback"
  • Reduce workload and increase impact: A resource giving ideas for transferring responsibility to students as part of the closing the gap process.

Wrap-up
  • Before watching the video series, Ms. McTeejay has only given evaluative feedback through grading and simple comments like "excellent", "nice work", "watch your spelling", or "follow capitalization rules" to her students.
      ▪ From the first video segment, Ms. McTeejay learns that feedback "engages students and teachers collaboratively in learning."
      ▪ From the second video segment, Ms. McTeejay learns that, although feedback is a vital component for improving student learning, not all feedback is beneficial.
      ▪ From the third video segment, Ms. McTeejay learns that providing effective feedback to her students requires purposeful planning. She also learns about "The Feedback Loop" (i.e., the continuous learning process that begins when students are assigned an activity that relates to a specific learning goal).
      ▪ From the fourth video segment, Ms. McTeejay learns that in order for the feedback she gives her students to be effective, it must connect directly to the learning goals and to the criteria that have been set for success.
      ▪ From the fifth, and final, video segment in the series, Ms. McTeejay learns that by providing effective, descriptive feedback to her students as they work toward learning goals, she is also helping them to develop strong self-assessment practices.
  • Revisit Initial Thoughts
      ▪ What should Ms. McTeejay know in order to provide effective feedback to her 8th grade students?

- What could Ms. McTeejay do to help her students better understand where they are, where they are going, and what they need to do to get there?

Assessment
- Answer the following questions:
  - Provide an example of "good" descriptive feedback and an example of "poor" feedback.
  - List three benefits of using descriptive feedback to assess and monitor students' progress.
  - List the four criteria of effective feedback.
  - Describe two ways that descriptive feedback can help a student increase learning outcomes.
  - Ms. McTeejay has one student whose scores on weekly probes have been falling consistently below a determined goal for several weeks. At the same time, she has another student whose work has been consistently above the determined goal for the past several weeks. Describe what types of descriptive feedback Ms. McTeejay might use to for each student.
  - In January, a new student, Maria, joined Ms. Becomasan's (Ms. McTeejay's mentee) English class. Maria has a learning disability and her former grades indicate she has been struggling academically, especially in classes that require writing. Ms. Becomasan has been assessing the writing products of her students since November using descriptive feedback. Ms. Becomasan would like to track Maria's writing progress, as well. How should she proceed? Include a minimum of three effective feedback strategies in your explanation.
  - Reflect on the types of feedback you are currently providing to students.
  - Reflect on how to improve the quantity and quality of feedback you provide.

Credits
- Website Masters:
  - Michelle Bennett, Doctoral Candidate
  - Terree Andrew, Doctoral Candidate
  - Dr. Cari Maneen
  - Dr. Julie Conn

  Gardner-Webb University
  Boiling Springs, NC
  July 2015/Revised March 2016

- Resources and Sources

  AER Video Library
  http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/aer/aervideo/descriptivefeedback.html#

  Cambridge Education
  http://www.camb-ed.co.uk/Services/tabid/84/ProductID/104/Default.aspx