

Figure 7.3

Effective Feedback

This chart sums up the key elements for constructive, effective feedback.

1. Be Timely

In most cases, feedback needs to happen as quickly as possible. The closer the feedback is given to the completion of the task, the more meaning it has for the learner.

3. Be Straightforward

Give examples from the students' work. Share data you may have collected in your observation. Be upfront, calm, and matter of fact.

5. Be Positive

Let the learner know what they did well. Let them also know what they *almost* did well. Make sure your voice, your words, and your comments indicate you believe the learner can reach their goal.

6. Offer Autonomy

Encourage the learner to offer their own ideas on how they can improve. Ask if they are ready to work on the suggestions you brainstormed. If they say, "no," ask them what they *are* willing to do. Let them know they have control over how much improvement they want to make.

8. Avoid Feedback Overload

Constructive feedback should not be overbearing. There will always be another opportunity to address points not covered in one session. Too much feedback at once can cause the learner to become disengaged, confused, or discouraged. Less is better.

2. Be Attentive

If you are giving verbal feedback, give the learner your undivided, focused attention. Get eye level with them, and make sure to limit distractions for both of you. If your feedback is in written form, be sure it is legible and easy to follow.

4. Use Descriptive Language

Use precise terms that leave little room for misinterpretation. Instead of using terms like "good" and "super," try for illustrative words that more accurately convey your meaning (e.g., "Your essay used clear, concise words that vividly described your main character." "You stopped your follow-through motion on your swing as soon as the ball connected." "Your bedroom is tidy, organized, and clean. It even smells like fresh laundry in here.").

7. Use Observations, Not Inferences

Inferences are the assumptions or opinions we have about an individual's actions.

It is not helpful to ascribe motives to another's acts. Simply state what you saw or heard (or derived from the other three senses). Observations should be objective and factual. Only the learner knows why they made the choices they did.