

Giving Feedback

Moving Towards Meaningful Productive Classroom Communication

Daniel Moonasar
Gimcheon University

Introduction

In this lecture we will discuss the basic concepts of giving and receiving feedback in the classroom, specific strategies for feedback, and practice critically evaluating feedback situations. While we will examine some specific feedback strategies there are many other strategies and approaches to giving feedback. This is something you as a teacher will have to develop and modify to your teaching style over time. Additionally, it is pertinent to discuss your curriculum and methods with your school, as you will be teaching in a new classroom environment with an unfamiliar or completely new culture. Finally, this lecture will try to accommodate participants at all levels but will focus mainly on participants new to teaching.

The What and Why of Feedback

Activity 1.1

Think back...

1. What was some positive feedback you received?
2. What was some negative feedback you received?
3. What made it impactful to you?

What is feedback? Is it telling a student, “Good job”, explaining a test answer, hanging up a picture, or rolling your eyes at a student feedback? These could all be justified as feedback but why? The definition of feedback is *any* response you make to students' efforts. This is a very ambiguous term but the most specific as it encompasses any type of communication a student can interpret as feedback on their efforts. For this reason types of feedback often include:

- Verbal
- Written
- Body language
- Tone of voice
- Sighs, breathing
- Doing something
- Doing nothing!

The last two answers might seem ridiculous but they are realist. Try to remember back to when you were a student. Did a teacher ever ignore you or did you miss-interpret their

response? How did it make you feel? This is one of the main reasons feedback is so difficult in the classroom. It is largely an interpreted communicative experience. It is a path for communication. This is why it needs to be specific and contextual yet sometimes fails in miscommunication.

With trying to manage your classes, give lessons, activities, and plan for classes we often neglect giving and receiving feedback. Feedback is a necessity in a conducive and productive learning environment. **Feedback allows communication of expectations, productiveness and quality of work, and attainments of learning goals.** Feedback is part of the learning process (**Table 1.1**) and is tied closely to the assessment process.

Like almost all facets of teaching, feedback needs practice and constant upkeep to make sure your feedback skills adaptable to various situations and students' learning style. Traditionally in the classroom feedback is given after assignments or often as a quick "good job" to reassure and encourage students. But feedback needs to be a two way street that is specific. How many times have you heard a teacher say, "good job" and see a student smile back in acceptance? What is this really telling the student? What is it helping the student to learn? How is it making your teaching better? This is the key. Feedback should be productive in nature and specific to the context in which it is happening (**Table 1.2**).

Table 1.1
Model of Learning (Race 2012)

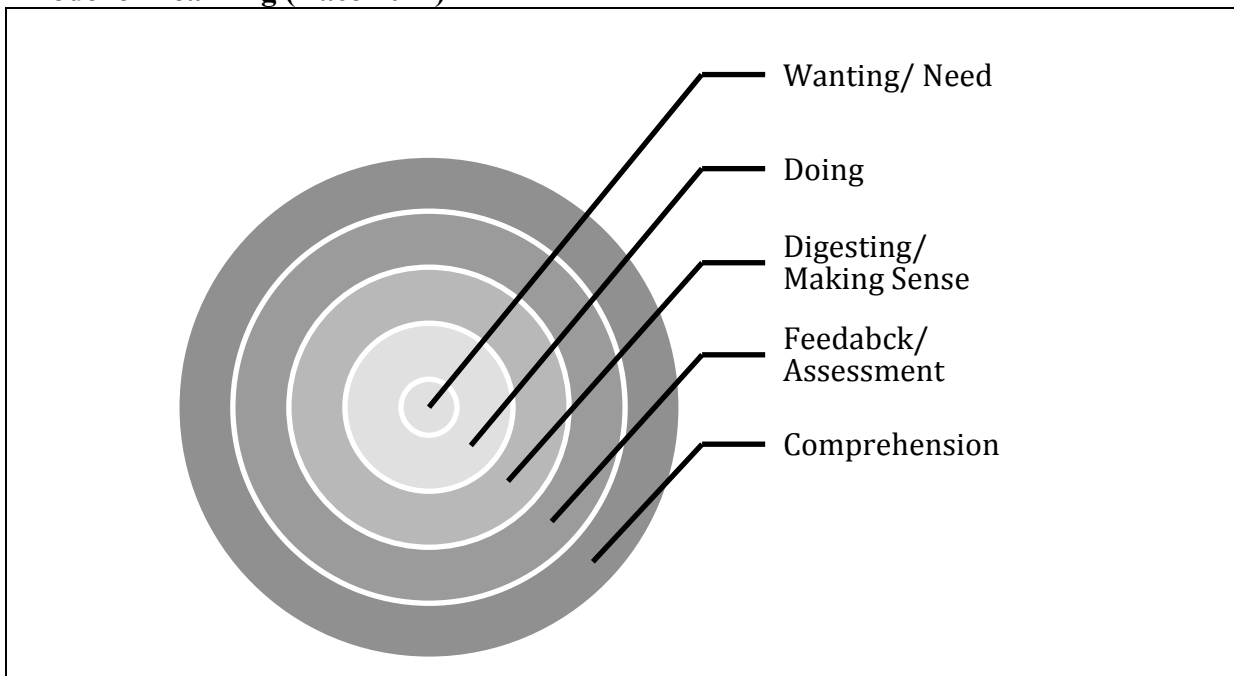


Table 1.2

| In your classroom feedback needs to be: |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• part of your classroom management system• part of your assessment strategies• involve your co-teacher• part of your professional development• continuous and built into your lesson planning• personal and engaging• positive & encouraging |

Categories and Types of Feedback

As mentioned before feedback is closely tied with assessment. Because of this the categories of feedback fall into the same categories as assessment. **Table 1.3** describes feedback in these three categories. These categories of feedback are not mutually exclusive of each other. They are often blended and used together as a greater strategy. There are definitely areas of grey between them and not meant for rigid implementation within their generalized characteristics.

Table 1.4

| Summative Assessment | Formative Assessment | Self Assessment |
|---|---|--|
| Provides feedback to achieve goals. Results in grades or points. | Check understanding & plan learning. Guides Ss to next goal. | Gives critical understanding (knowledge awareness.) |
| Given after a task has been done (Cold error correction) | Given while a task is being done (Hot error correction) | Given throughout class |
| Exams, unit/national tests, quizzes, final projects, report cards | Observations, questioning, informal/formal conversations, learning logs, checklists | Discussions, peer feedback, journals, portfolios, projects, student created assessment |

Although there are many types of feedback it will be useful for us to look at the three primary types of feedback. Typically in the classroom you see **verbal, written, and visual feedback**. Within these three primary types there are various strategies and techniques for both giving and receiving feedback as well as error corrections. These strategies should be used as a framework and modified for your classroom situation. You will need to modify them to your style and learning goals.

Verbal Feedback

This is the most often used and abused type of feedback in the classroom. When choosing to use verbal feedback there are some issues to consider.

- **Specific Vs. Non-Specific** - Many teachers do not give specific feedback. They instead fall back to quick and encompassing feedback i.e. “*Good job!*”. Be specific; tell the student exactly what you like about their work and why it is good.

- **Eliciting Vs. Telling-** Instead of being just an output feedback machine, try eliciting feedback from your students. Ask them why they think their work is good, what was good about your modeling, or what could have been done better.
- **Positive Vs. Constructive-** Feedback should not be negative in nature nor should it be “sugar coated”. Both are counterproductive to a good learning environment. Remember feedback can be critical but needs to be productive in nature. If a student does something wrong they need to know why it was wrong and how they can fix it, and how it will make them better.

Written Feedback

Written feedback is most associated with error correction and critical feedback. You may notice that your students will fear getting their papers back and will over sensationalize any kind of written feedback. This is still very typical in South Korea but it is changing. There are many different error correction symbols. No matter what symbols you choose remember to be consistent and teach your students the meaning of them. Below (**Table 1.5**) is an example of some typical written error correction codes that you can use when giving written feedback.

Table 1.5

| Mark | Error Indicated |
|-------|---|
| ^ | A word is missing |
| / | Start a new sentence |
| // | Start a new paragraph |
| Gr | Grammar error |
| Sp | Spelling error |
| P | Punctuation error |
| Art | Error with articles (a, an, the) |
| c/unc | Countable/uncountable error (you can use a/an before countable nouns but never before uncountable noun) |
| Wo | Wrong word order |
| Ww | Wrong word |
| Wt | Wrong tense |
| Wf | Wrong form |
| Irreg | Irregular verb |
| ? | Unclear |

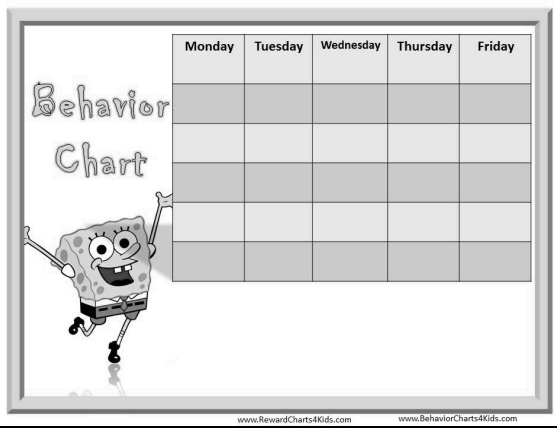
(<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/writing-correction-code>)

Visual Feedback

As with all cultures they have our own particular forms of body language and visual cues. Your classroom is no different. Over time you will learn some South Korean specific cultural body language that is useful in the classroom as well as develop your own body language and communicative gestures that are part of your teaching style. As you and your students learn these it is important that you make them consistent and clear. Try to make your body language repetitive, clear, and meaningful. I would highly recommend recording yourself and studying your body language. You will be surprised at what you do and the effect it has on your students and co-teachers.

Hot and Cold Feedback Techniques

In addition to the above-mentioned types of feedback there are common techniques for giving feedback. These techniques don't necessarily fit into one single category. Below (**Table 1.4**) is a chart **hot** (given during learning) and **cold** (giving after) error corrections.

| Hot error correction techniques | |
|---|---|
| Noting errors | Write errors on the board and verbally correct them. |
| Mouthing | Show the mouth shape of a sound or word correctly. |
| Gesturing | Show or gesture the correct answer. This also includes pointing and forming with the fingers and body language. |
| Modeling | This refers to another person who is modeling correctly. |
| Echoing | Echo the student's error, i.e. "You speak with your lips or your lips?" |
| Highlight the problem | Specifically highlight the error. i.e. "Open your mouth more." "That is a "p" sound, not a "f" sound" |
| Meaning vs. intention | Point out the difference in the student's meaning vs. intention. i.e. S: I go home. T: Are you going home now or later? |
| CCQs (Comprehension/ Concept Check Questions) | "How many vocabulary words do you need?" "Which one can you use at school?" (points to a picture of scissors and shears) "How many blue pencils are there?" |
| Cold error correction techniques | |
| Feedback/ Progress reports | These can be detailed or visual feedback reports. ex.  |
| Recording/ Listening | Either record students or use recordings to highlight or correct errors. |

Receiving Feedback

Although we haven't talked too much about it, receiving feedback will be intricate to your success teaching here. From my experience sometimes it can be difficult to receive or understand the feedback I have received. Part of receiving feedback here in Korea is building a trusting relationship with your students, co-teacher(s) and school. After building this

relationship others might find it easier to give you direct feedback, something in most western cultures we are used to and expect. You need to actively build a culture of feedback if there is not one at your school. One of the best ways of getting feedback is to record your class and then go back and analyze it using the materials in this training book. Make a list of what works and what doesn't then make some specific strategies on changes that you want to make.

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About the lecturer:

Daniel Moonasar is a professor of English at Gimcheon University as well as a lecturer for the EPIK (English Program in Korea) and TaLK (Teach and Learn in Korea) programs. He has been teaching EFL in South Korea since 2009 and before that was a certified teacher in the U.S. His professional interests are curriculum development and teacher training while research interests include institutional effectiveness and understanding cultural perceptions of multiculturalism in South Korea. Daniel is currently a MRes candidate studying Educational and Social Research with the University of London. Further information and resources can be found on his blog at: <http://danielmoonasar.wordpress.com/>