Giving “Good” Student Feedback

Feedback ensures that we move forward efficiently and enhance our knowledge, skills, abilities and relationship with others. The best feedback is specific, actionable, timely and respectful.

Specific
Rather than providing general comments, give feedback that will provide tools for improvement. What exactly worked or requires improvement?

Focus feedback on a few specific items. As an evaluator, you can narrow the scope of your feedback by asking yourself: If this presenter could only change one thing next time they presented their lesson, what would make the most significant improvement?

Actionable
Concentrate on future improvement by offering the presenter concrete suggestions emphasizing what could be done next time (vs. what they did “wrong” this time).

Timely
Effective feedback is immediate and frequent; it is specifically tied to the event being evaluated and given often.

Respectful
Make an effort to look for the good. Classroom self-confidence is a key component required for new instructors to take student-centred (vs. teacher-centred) approaches in the classroom (Sadler, 2013), so identifying and communicating a presenter’s demonstrated strengths is integral to building that person’s belief in their own abilities.

Ensure that your comments are positive and non-judgemental. Reword & restate comments that would include “You” to “I-statements”; for example, changing the statement, “You did not demonstrate the relationship between X and Y.” to “I did not understand the relationship between X and Y.”

Focus on the design and delivery of the lesson rather than on the personal attributes of the presenter.

References