Giving Students Feedback

Feedback is the way in which teachers can encourage student behavior and academic progress. It allows students to reflect on their current work and supports their metacognition as they learn. When given in a positive and timely manner, feedback allows students to see their strengths and weaknesses with objectivity and it encourages their improvement in areas where they need support. Effective feedback provides a model or example for the students to clearly follow. Students are responsible for their own learning and giving feedback provides students the autonomy that they need. In addition, focusing on only one skill prevents students from feeling overwhelmed when in the classroom.

Feedback can inform and help students because it provides a mode in which they can assess themselves and learn from mistakes to improve their work. Feedback is a useful tool that allows students to know their strengths and weaknesses in a particular subject area which strengthens their knowledge in themselves and what they do and do not know. In addition, informative feedback allows students to monitor their own learning and become autonomous, independent learners.

Feedback is a constructive means to provide student guidance in an academic context and advice is a suggestion based on the opinion of others.

Five effective feedback practices are:

1. Being sensitive to the individual needs of the students - Effective feedback allows teachers to know the students and to tailor their instruction to each student. Whole class instruction is good, but individual feedback allows teachers to evaluate students on an individual basis and to challenge the areas that are weaker and to encourage the more positive areas of growth.
2. Feedback should be given in a timely manner - When feedback is not provided in a timely manner, it reduces its effectiveness. Students need to know soon after their work is handed in, what they should work on, in order to support their ongoing development and academic progress.
3. Concentrating on one ability or skill - This stops the students from feeling overwhelmed and stressed. If students are only led to focus on one skill, then when they work on it, they can feel a sense of accomplishment and not defeat.

4. Have students take notes - This allows students to monitor their own progress and helps build autonomy in students.
5. Explain what you noticed - It is important for teachers to tell students what they saw and noticed in their work to provide accurate feedback to the students and to acknowledge their strengths.