

## VI. Descriptive Feedback

Students should be provided with evidence-based feedback that causes thinking, is linked to the intended instructional outcomes and criteria for success, and has the potential to improve the quality of the work. This dimension focuses on the teacher's role in providing focused feedback to individual students or small groups of students on a specific piece of work. Research suggests that student learning improves when students are provided with descriptive feedback that is connected to clear targets, descriptive feedback that provides guidance on how to improve work, and time to act on the feedback.

The rubrics include three dimensions that address distinct aspects of feedback: *Descriptive Feedback*, *Extending Thinking During Discourse*, and *Peer Feedback*. The *Descriptive Feedback* dimension is specific to more formal feedback that tends to be given to individual students on a specific piece of work, either in written form or orally (e.g., during student-teacher conferences) by the teacher.

1 Not Observed	2 Beginning	3 Developing	4 Progressing	5 Extending
<p>The teacher provides no descriptive feedback.</p>	<p>The teacher provides <i>evaluative</i> feedback on a specific piece of work (e.g., a score, grade, or other summative feedback).</p> <p>..... or .....</p> <p>Feedback seems disconnected to the intended learning goals.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Corrective feedback does all the thinking for the students; subsequent student actions consist solely of following directions.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>The teacher does not have a systematic approach for providing feedback to most or all students.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>There is no opportunity for students to review the feedback, ask questions in order to internalize the feedback, or apply the feedback to their work in meaningful ways.</p>	<p>The teacher provides descriptive feedback on a specific piece of work that supports the learning goals and/or reflects the criteria for success.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Corrective feedback sometimes does all the thinking for the students; other times it appropriately scaffolds the next steps that students are to take.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>It is unclear whether the teacher has a systematic approach for providing feedback to most or all students.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>There is little or no opportunity for students to review the feedback, ask questions in order to internalize the feedback, or apply the feedback to their work in meaningful ways.</p>	<p>The teacher provides descriptive feedback on a specific piece of work that supports the learning goals and/or reflects the criteria for success.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Corrective feedback appropriately scaffolds the next steps students are to take, pointing out one or more areas to work on, followed by a suggestion, reminder, or question to elicit further learning from the students.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>It is unclear whether the teacher has a systematic approach for providing feedback to most or all students.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Students are provided with limited structures and supports (e.g., limited time is provided or students are confused about the process) to review the feedback, ask questions in order to internalize the feedback, or apply the feedback to their work in meaningful ways.</p>	<p>The teacher provides descriptive feedback on a specific piece of work that supports the learning goals and/or reflects the criteria for success.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Corrective feedback appropriately scaffolds the next steps students are to take, pointing out one or more areas to work on, followed by a suggestion, reminder, or question to elicit further learning from the students.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>It is clear that the teacher has a systematic approach for providing feedback to most or all students.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Students are provided with ample structures and supports (e.g., time, feedback structures, etc.) to review the feedback, ask questions in order to internalize the feedback, or apply the feedback to their work in meaningful ways.</p>

## Observation Notes

### *Descriptive Feedback*



Across the levels of the rubric, the use of *descriptive* feedback is emphasized. Descriptive feedback can be either written or oral feedback that supports the learning goals and/or reflects the criteria for success. However, descriptive feedback should not be provided with a score or a grade, since the research indicates that when descriptive feedback is combined with a score or grade, students will pay more attention to the score or grade than to improving their thinking, understanding, or work product.



At the highest level, descriptive feedback supports learning goals by identifying current understanding and by providing suggestions for how to improve a piece of work. Feedback is often written but may be provided orally to younger students, or provided during teacher-student conferences or group work. It is different from praise, general encouragement, or simple validation of correct responses in that it directs attention to the learning goals and to the student's specific strengths and needs as the student progresses toward mastery.



At the highest level of this rubric, “students are provided with opportunities to use the feedback or apply it to their work in meaningful ways” requires that students are not only given feedback and provided with time to review it but are also provided with structured opportunities to understand what the feedback means for their specific learning, to internalize the feedback, and to move their performance forward. For example, a teacher may provide time for students to *“strive for the next level.”* Evidence of these opportunities may also include reference to homework assignments or other opportunities to revise work prior to receiving a final grade.



At the higher levels of the rubrics, students need to have a meaningful opportunity to use the feedback: there must be evidence that there is an opportunity (i.e., the teacher references how the feedback will be used during the observed lesson, for homework, or in a future lesson). A vague reference such as “these comments should help you on your next task” is not sufficient for a meaningful opportunity to use the feedback.



At the lower levels of the rubric, the feedback is so limited in quality and quantity that the students do not have an indication of how to improve their work. Note that for a focused task, the feedback could be brief but still meaningful to the students, for example: “When I hear you read aloud in your small group, you are not yet reading at the same pace. As you continue to practice, make sure you start together and pay attention to each other's pace as you read.” It would not have been helpful for these students if the teacher had said, “You all aren't reading at the same pace” without providing any guidance for what to do next or without asking students what they thought they could do to improve.



The rubrics refer to whether the teacher has a systematic approach to providing feedback to most or all students. This comment is in recognition of the fact that descriptive feedback takes time and attention from the teacher. Therefore, this dimension may not be seen in every lesson,

and when feedback is observed, there may not be evidence that every student received feedback during a single lesson. A teacher does not need to provide feedback to all students in the class to score at the highest level of the rubric, but there must be evidence that all students who need feedback will receive it at some point in time.

- For example, if a teacher had differentiated groups working on a project and identified two groups as able to work independently or with peer feedback, the teacher could choose to focus on the third group. If the teacher held small conferences with each student in the third group, he or she could score at the highest level, depending on the quality of the feedback and opportunities to revise.
- On the other hand, a teacher could plan to meet with every student over the course of several lessons. An observer might only see the teacher holding one-on-one writing conferences with four students due to time demands. If the teacher says, “Next up are [reads four names from the grade book]. We will meet next lesson,” the teacher’s plans are evident and he or she could also score at the highest level of the rubric. Without this evidence, an observer would have to score at a *Developing* or a *Progressing* level, depending on the other evidence.



While the title of the dimension is Descriptive Feedback, brief or concise feedback that requires student thinking is still applicable. For example, a teacher could provide individualized descriptive feedback on a set of ten math problems by using an approach such as “*find and fix*”.



Additional Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
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