

FIGURE 1. Focusing Feedback: Common Classroom Practices and Possible Questions

Focus	What We Want to See	What We Often See	Feedback Questions
Class Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher prompts discussion, but students carry the conversation, responding to one another's thoughts, talking to each other rather than the teacher. • Language is complex; students should express complete thoughts, questions, and connections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher asks a series of questions that have a specific, desired, typically brief response. Once a student answers the question, the teacher asks a different question of another student. • Four or five students (often volunteers) respond to the teacher, while the remainder of the class observes. • Student language is simple, fragmented, and ideas unelaborated or unsupported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn from listening to the student discussion you led? • How could you change the complexity of your questions to elicit more student interaction/debate? • What strategies could you use to empower more students to speak and all students to speak more? • What can you do to make sure students speak in complete sentences using sophisticated vocabulary and fully support or explain their ideas? • How do you prepare students for discussion participation and discussion leadership?
Formative Assessment (during group or independent work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher uses a strategy requiring every student to participate or practice in ways that let the teacher assess their understanding of concepts/skills (ideally before they practice/apply them outside class). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher asks questions of a few volunteer students or asks a rhetorical question like, "Does everyone understand?" leaving the teacher without knowledge of most students' understanding. • The teacher checks for understanding by grading homework before students have had supported practice. • The teacher circulates during group/individual work time asking vague questions ("Everything OK?") without probing students. • The teacher uses group/practice time to do their own work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could you use available technology or other strategies to efficiently check what all students know? • How could you group students during your check to allow more students to participate and to allow you to collect more evidence of what they know? How would you attend to those multiple groups to check for understanding? • What strategies could you use to get a more random sample of students during your check? • What specific question/task could students answer/do to demonstrate understanding to you as you circulate during work time? • During group work, what can you ask that requires students to reflect on their process, push their thinking, or self-assess?

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FIGURE 1. Focusing Feedback: Common Classroom Practices and Possible Questions (continued)

Focus	What We Want to See	What We Often See	Feedback Questions
Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher purposely chooses activities and groups so that students receive appropriately targeted instruction when they rotate through the teacher’s station.• Station work is meaningful, can be done without teacher support, and is best done in groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As students rotate through stations, they are each doing the same independent task (e.g., each has the same map to label/color), making the convening of stations unnecessary.• The work required in the independent stations necessitates teacher support, too often pulling the teacher from students at the teacher’s station.• Stations/groups are not constructed to provide scaffolding/stretching for students with different needs/abilities.• Time at stations is too brief for meaningful interaction between teacher/students.• Stretch or sponge activities are not available leaving students who finish early with nothing to do but wait to rotate.• Outside the teacher station, students are doing “time-filler” tasks that are not rigorous, not aligned to objectives, or not designed to build their skills/knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why did you choose station work for these activities?• How could you have grouped students differently to give them a richer experience?• How could alternate groupings change the guided work in your teacher’s station?• How could you leverage technology to make some station work a more individualized experience?• How do you determine the time required for each rotation?• What was the important learning for students at each station? How was learning enhanced/layered by doing it in this group and in these timed rotations?• Which students probably found the station work easy or hard? How do you design the stations so that those students are supported/stretching?• How will you build on today’s station work tomorrow?

Figure 1 continues on p. 54.

FIGURE 1. Focusing Feedback: Common Classroom Practices and Possible Questions (continued)

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Student Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are asked to produce work for authentic audiences causing them to analyze, synthesize, theorize, and create their own meaning rather than seeking answers from a text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are assigned questions with answers that may be directly found in text/other source. • Students are given a problem set. The problems are designed to be easily solved, all similar, and have no real-world context. • Students are not asked to think about the process and quality of their own work. • Students do work that only the teacher sees. • Students present work to peers who have been given no purpose as an audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could you make your students' work more authentic? • How could students design some of the problems they are practicing/solving? • What would change if the problem set already contained answers and students analyzed for errors or to deduce the process for arriving at the answers? • What level (Bloom's) are most of the questions students are answering? • How could you offer students a choice in how they show evidence of mastery? • Who is the audience for your students' work? How does the audience engage with them, require them to explain and defend their work, or learn from their work? • How can you structure presentations of work products so that each student gets maximum time presenting/defending and as little time as possible passively listening? • What feedback will students get on this work to help them adjust the way they do it next time?
Personalized Learning and Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students explore a question or research topic that personally interests them, using a variety of sources/experiences, and communicate their learning to others. They determine content, process, and products and have authentic struggles with information gathering, project management, and collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are assigned a project topic/question with a teacher-defined process and product. • Project work has no authentic audience or real-world purpose. • Project work is done in teacher-assigned groups with little preparation of roles and matching of skillsets to tasks. • Teacher controls the timeline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the reason for the project? • How could you offer students choice in their topic, process, or product for this project? • What's a real-world connection or authentic audience for this project? • How can you design project work to give students experience with the challenges of altering timelines, revising scope, collaborating with others, and connecting with experts? • Was there learning that all students needed related to this project? How did you ensure that each student, regardless of their project, got that necessary learning?
Use of Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology tools are leveraged to: take advantage of teachable moments, individualize instruction, access primary sources, provide forums for exchanging ideas and feedback, improve the writing process, use multiple media, allow student choice in mode of expression, assist in organization of materials, and find authentic audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology is underutilized. • Technology is the digital version of an analog activity. • Technology is used for automation (ease), not for the advancement of the learning experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could technology improve the students' writing process? • How could the use of technology change the formats and audiences for student work? • How could technology expand students' resources beyond the school? • How could technology allow each student to learn at their own pace? • How could technology have helped streamline the organization of learning activities? • How could technology have allowed more students to build on each other's ideas?