

Instructional presentation



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

There is a vast body of research on the intricate link between academic success and a perceived self-worth. There is also a large amount of research detailing how the dynamics of student-teacher interactions play a key role in the formation of self-worth by these same students. However, Fay and Funk (1995) point out that educators only have access to the formation of such perceptions when providing feedback to behavior. Schroeder (n. d.) points out that feedback also involves the methods by which the educator communicates correctness of student responses to academic questions. Jim Fay's (1995) discussion of three major teaching styles reminds readers that feedback sends not only the overt message of the words used but the covert messages of tone, actions and general body language. Of the three teaching styles - helicopter, drill sergeants, and consultants - it is the consultant teacher who embodies the overt and covert " messages of personal worth, dignity, and strength" (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 197). When looking to the strategies employed by consultant teachers, it becomes obvious that these can be used with all teaching styles to provide corrective feedback in a whole instruction setting.

First, educators should make sure the questions being asked are of appropriate difficulty and cognitive levels while being stated as clearly as possible. Schroeder (n. d.) suggests that questions dealing with new material should be such that 80% of the responses given are correct and 90+% for review materials. Educators may find that low-level questions that ask what, where, and who are best for this. Such pedagogical procedures will promote self-esteem as well as momentum needed to progress with instructional activities. Students will then be more willing to work for answers to higher order questions dealing with the why and how.

Secondly, teachers should react to responses in such a way as to encourage student answers. Quick, certain responses that are correct need only affirmation that they are indeed correct. Correct but hesitantly given responses need the affirmation of correctness as well as praise and perhaps a short review of why the response is correct. Incorrect responses that are due to a careless error need only a quick reference to the error and time for the student to be allowed to provide the correct answer. Incorrect answers based on a lack of knowledge should be met with prompts and hints that may engage the needed information. Clarifying, rephrasing, or even changing the difficulty level may also assist these students (Schroeder, n. d.). Educators should provide students with every opportunity to get a correct answer but should not prolong the experience once it becomes obvious that the student lacks the knowledge needed.

Third, instead of issuing orders teachers should present expectations as a challenge of something the student can and will do – positive expectancy.

There are many procedures that will engender such an atmosphere.

However, students sometimes resist the challenge even though a sense of positive expectancy has been created. Effective teachers will continue to work with the student and try to help him identify how to meet the expectation.

Such teachers are engaging in tenacity (Saphier & Gower, 1987). Tenacious teachers engage in a “no excuses” policy. In this procedure the teacher will ask why the student is unable to meet the expectation. She will then refuse to accept such excuses. Work may be sent back to be done over; supplies may be procured and provided to the student; help and individual instruction may be offered more often; and eventually the consequences of the

performance – superior, adequate, or poor – will be given without anger (Saphier & Gower, 1987).

Such a discussion is not complete without including a mention of negative feedback. It has been posited that negative feedback may be damaging to self-worth. According to Saphier and Gower (1987), “...honest feedback... does not damage students’ self-image...[t]eachers show they are caring people through feedback that is clear and honest...” (p. 381-382). When students provide an incorrect answer, they must be told that their answer is incorrect. The question then becomes how to provide the needed feedback without seeming to single out or humiliate the student.

If it is important to receive correct answers from individuals, revisiting might prove useful. The educator should note which students have not answered correctly as well as a question that each student can answer. At some point in the question-and-answer session, the educator will return to the student with this question. Once the student has provided a correct answer, praise is given.

If the group is having trouble with a particular concept, choral response seems to be the most widely used method to provide whole class feedback (Schroeder, n. d.). Here the teacher provides the correct answer(s) and the students provide the correct response (often repeatedly) as a group when the question is asked in various forms.

Perhaps the most beneficial practice is to create a climate in which incorrect answers are a natural happening. Students need to know that making a mistake is a part of life and how to deal with mistakes without embarrassment or becoming defensive. After students have sufficiently mastered a particular skill, teachers may even create situations in which

they make mistakes and then praise students for catching those mistakes (Schroeder, n. d.).

Works Cited:

Fay, J. & Funk, D. (1995). Teaching with love & logic. Golden, CO: The Love & Logic Press, Inc.

Saphier, J. & Gower, R. (1987). The skillful teacher. Carlisle, MA: Research for Better Teaching, Inc.

Schroeder, B. (n. d.). The research literature: academic feedback. Retrieved June 30, 2008, from <http://www.usu.edu/teachall/text/effective/research/feed.pdf>