



# MODULE 5

## 5.2 FEEDBACK

### How to give feedback

Every teacher knows that one of the best ways to help students improve is to give feedback. But what is feedback?

"**Feedback** is the **information the student receives about his or her language learning** and, most commonly, it is information about his or her language production (spoken and written). However, feedback can also be about reading and listening, study skills, attitude, effort and so on" (Kerr, 2020).

It is important to provide feedback on the **outcome of the task** but also on **how the students arrived at that outcome**. According to several researchers, feedback on correct answers is more effective than feedback on mistakes. In fact, students may feel uncomfortable when they receive negative feedback. **Positive feedback, on the other hand, motivates students.**

In order not to make students feel uncomfortable, the teacher can use the **feedback sandwich**. How does it work?

First, we focus on the positive aspects and then on correcting errors. When we correct the mistakes, we share the negative feedback with the class.

Feedback must never make the student feel judged. We must always **create conditions that help students learn from our feedback**, we must build a relationship of trust with them and motivate them.

There are different **types of feedback**. The most common is **correction**. Correction serves to show the error made by the student and correct it.

Usually, teachers correct speech and writing.

When correcting speech, it is important to focus on vocabulary and pronunciation, not grammatical accuracy. Vocabulary and pronunciation in fact help students focus on the content, i.e. what they are saying.

When correcting writing, on the other hand, it is important to focus on the content and also on grammatical accuracy. In fact, writing is a reflective activity, so students have plenty of time to work on the accuracy with which they express themselves.



A less intimidating way to give feedback is to use **peer feedback**. In this way, students can carefully and attentively check their peers' work, learn from the mistakes of others and become more independent and autonomous.

The effectiveness of peer evaluation depends on the teacher's ability to give students clear guidance. In fact, it is important to give students guidance on which to base their assessment, to prevent them from focusing only on grammatical accuracy.

For example, at first we can ask them to give a general assessment of their peers' performance. Then we can ask them to focus on specific linguistic elements.

Remember that when using peer assessment, students should be at more or less the same level. This is the best way to help them learn from each other.

### **When do you give feedback?**

According to some experts, it is best to give feedback immediately to speed up learning. However, other experts prefer to give feedback with a little delay. This has a double advantage:

- It does not interrupt communication;
- All students in the class can learn from the same correction.

A good idea to exploit delayed feedback in speaking activities is to ask students to record their own voice to work on pronunciation and intonation.

The teacher must get to know his or her students and understand how they react to feedback. Some students are willing to be corrected in public, while others may feel embarrassed and lose motivation. For this reason, it is crucial to **customise feedback according to each student's preferences, language level and learning style**. For example, advanced students can more easily understand indirect feedback (i.e. feedback in which the teacher does not immediately give the right answer) because they are more independent learners and already have the necessary tools to understand how error correction works.

In conclusion, when giving feedback, you must always be precise and detailed about the students' work. Remember, however, that your attitude also determines how the students react to the feedback. If students feel that feedback is a way of controlling them, then feedback will not be very useful. Therefore, present feedback as a tool to improve and not to become perfect or better than others.

To motivate students to feedback, always remind them of the road they have travelled and compare their improvements with their final goals.