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Lehre in der Fremdsprache Teaching in English

DA

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Feedback

Feedback is a valuable tool to allow lecturers and students to periodically review their progress and make adjustments. Feedback provides students with an indication of where they are in relation to achieving the course's aims and objectives.

A good piece of feedback needs to be placed in a positive framework. Lecturers should explicitly identify and positively reinforce what was done well. When commenting on weaknesses, feedback should be specific and encouraging, and not vague and demotivating. The two examples below demonstrate how good feedback includes positive and negative comments in a constructive way, as well as recommendations for improvement in the future. In this way, effective feedback also feeds forward.

*“The case study discussion seemed to be **very productive** and *most of the students* participated with **meaningful comments** and good answers to your questions. Unfortunately, *there didn't seem to be* enough time for closure, and *I sensed that* the students needed to have **some resolution** of at least the major issues in the case, especially since their mid-term is coming up soon. Since you are trying to keep to your schedule, *it is probably impractical* to resume the discussion in the next class, but *one solution might be* to prepare a handout to tie up some of the loose ends that you can give to the students next time.”*

*“Your opening points of the lecture were very interesting and I could see how they **were related** to the day’s topic, but during the lecture the students *seemed a bit* confused about the connections. *Perhaps you could* write these points on the board or **prepare them ahead of time** on an overhead transparency so you could refer to them again during the remainder of the lecture.”¹*

The phrases in italics illustrate how criticism is softened through the use of “I” phrases and hedging words, such as “seems to be”, “perhaps”, “a bit”, and “most of”. The phrases in bold are descriptive words to use for either positive or negative comments and suggestions.

¹ https://cit.duke.edu/pdf/grad/constructive_feedback.pdf
Last accessed on 26 November 2018

What is Feedback?

Feedback is any response to a student's work, and can be given by lecturers, assessors and other students, but it is usually expressed in written or verbal form.

1

Complete the diagram below with other examples of feedback.



Descriptors to Convey Average Performance

2

Fill in the gaps to create words. These words will come in useful in later exercises.

me iocr tol able onv ntional

hu rum nexc ptional hack yed

si pli t c ro aic b n l

ass ble edestri n unme orab e

Softening Your Criticism

3

Make the following statements less direct using **modals** (*may, might, could, etc.*), **personal attribution** (*I think, I feel*) or **hedging** (*deliberately vague language*). You might need to rewrite the sentences.

- a This sentence should come first.
(seems to me)
- b More detail is needed in your report.
(think / might / helpful)
- c You really must write more about this theory.
(my only criticism / could)
- d You keep on repeating yourself; you have to change your wording.
(at times / perhaps / consider)
- e Why didn't you come to see me if you have been struggling recently?
(I / noticed / difficulty / could)

Generalised Language for Feedback

4

Look at the words below. When and why would a lecturer make use of such words?

apparently	presumably	is likely to
tend(s) to	a tendency for	every likelihood
liable to		

Fill in the gaps with one of the words above:

- a The best age for learning a new language is, , the teenage years.
- b There is that the results will be published in September.
- c The situation concerning exams is change in the near future.
- d Boys be more interested in football than girls.
- e Pronouncing new sounds comes easier to young children.
- f Starting revision early improve overall exam performance.
- g There is mature students to take their studies more seriously.

Feedback on Oral Presentations

5

Look at the examples in the left-hand column of the table below and write an improved piece of feedback in the corresponding box on the right. Each box on the right contains a key word to help guide you in your feedback. The first one has been done for you.

BADLY WRITTEN FEEDBACK	WELL WRITTEN FEEDBACK
<p>“You should have thought through your sequence more carefully.”</p> <p>Command</p>	<p>“It might have been better to ...”</p> <p>Suggestion</p>
<p>“You did a poor job with the example problem.”</p> <p>Judgemental</p>	<p>Observation</p>
<p>“In a similar situation I would have ...”</p> <p>Teacher’s Perspective</p>	<p>Student’s Perspective</p>
<p>“You’re unfocussed!”</p> <p>Personality</p>	<p>Behaviour</p>

The “Feedback Sandwich”

There are usually three components to feedback, and this is commonly referred to as “the feedback sandwich”. Feedback begins with praise; a positive acknowledgement of what has been done well. This leads on to weaknesses, which are delivered in a softened and constructive way. The final part contains suggestions for improvement.

6

Below are three common scenarios for students requiring feedback. Read through each scenario and write a short piece of feedback for each. Your feedback should follow the structure and style defined by “the feedback sandwich”. For each piece of feedback, you should write approximately 5 sentences.

- **Good Student**

The student never misses a lecture, contributes to discussions, participates in activities and completes homework assignments on time. Their work is of a high standard and they show originality in their thinking and ask pertinent questions to further their understanding.

- **Bad Student**

When this student actually comes to class, they sit at the back of the room and they appear to often be distracted by their laptop or phone. They rarely complete homework assignments (only when formally graded), and never participate in group discussions. When asked questions, they often cannot answer, or appear disinterested.



- **Struggling Student**

This student is eager, interested and always attends class. They readily participate in group discussions and activities. They undertake all assignments, but often there are gaps where they find specific exercises difficult. The student clearly struggles to grasp important concepts, although they take a serious interest in the course.

Layers of Feedback: Finding a Middle-Ground

Feedback needs to be phrased in such a way that it encourages the student to improve. Feedback that leaves the student feeling demoralised or reprimanded is unlikely to bring about positive change.

7 *Read each of the statements below and describe how the phrasing of each impacts on you and makes you feel. How would you describe this?*

- a** “Omit this paragraph.”
- b** “You might consider omitting this paragraph.”
- c** “I wonder what you gain by including this paragraph / statement.”

Ineffective Feedback

8

Read the phrases below and categorise the type of feedback to the following labels: *Command / Boss / Editor, Patronising, Dismissive, Passing the Buck, Mixed Messages, Sarcastic.*

- a “You really should understand the basics by now.”
- b “I could have found this on Wikipedia too.”
- c “Consult Student Support Services.”
- d “Remove this paragraph.”
- e “You should go back and make sure you understand the topic.”
- f “How much work did you put into this?”
- g “You need help with your English.”
- h “This is good, but you go into too much detail.”
- i “Rewrite this section.”



9 Rewrite each of the statements above in a more constructive and effective way. Try and integrate the following phrasing into your answers:

- “it seemed / appeared to me that ...”
- “I noticed / felt that ...”
- “at times / sometimes ...”
- “tend(s) to ...”
- use of modal verbs “may, might, could”

For further guidance, refer to exercise 3.

10

Write a short piece of feedback for the essay paragraph on the following page. In your feedback, you may like to consider the following points:

- appropriateness and consistency of vocabulary and register
- unity and cohesion
- general grammar and punctuation
- verb confusion
- overall impression

“How can watching English language TV series and films be beneficial for learners of English.

Being in contact with the language and acquainting new vocabulary is one part where learners of English benefit in by watching TV series and films. The other part where they of course benefit in is their pronunciation! These two parts mentioned above are useful for learners when they want to improve their pronunciation of certain words or even want to learn it in general. In most of the cases they will pay attention to a native speaker in a film for example and they will adapt his or her way of pronouncing certain words. Furthermore, by watching different international TV series and films, learners will come in contact with different accents and dialects in the English language, that is way more useful than just reading a text book. They can administer these learned in their daily lives when utilising English if they want to. Furthermore, this can be seen as a sort of listening exercise that they create by themselves. Learners can choose on their own which part of a film or a TV series according pronunciation, they want to watch and ameliorate their speaking habits in.”

11

Match the poorly chosen words and comments on the left in the list below to more appropriate words on the right.

Sloppy	Keep on track and do not lose sight of the key points.
Lazy	I cannot see how this information supports your argument.
Superficial	Your arguments lack structure.
Sweeping	Needs more detail.
Confusing	This reads too general and could be applied too broadly.
Get to the point!	This is rather difficult to follow.
You've missed the point.	Greater effort needs to be demonstrated in the future.
Irrelevant	I think you may have misunderstood the key premise of the topic.

12

In the lists below, match the negative comments to their antonyms.

vague

irrelevant

dull

unconvincing

unstructured

long-winded

clichéd

woolly

interesting

concise

precise

original

credible

focussed

developed

germane

13

Read the sentences below, and replace the words or phrases in **bold** with the appropriate synonym in the list in Exercise 12. The first sentence has been done for you.

- a While your oral presentation contained a great deal of information, it was delivered in a rather **dull** manner.
- b The points you raised in your argument are very **pertinent** to our current situation.
- c Your conclusions were **clear and to the point**, avoiding any unnecessary detail.
- d The stance you took in your argument was **ambiguous**.
- e You provided a **succinct** conclusion, nicely drawing your ideas to a close.
- f You have clearly put a lot of effort into writing your paper, however at times the content was **nebulous**.
- g You put forward a **solid** argument to justify your point of view.
- h You took your initial idea and **followed it through** in a very logical way.
- i While you provided a **textbook** solution to the question, it didn't show any original thinking.

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- ① Your essay was well written, but your overall argument **lacked conviction**.
- ② Your presentation was **verbose** and over-ran the allotted time slot.
- ③ The case you put forward as an example is very **believable**.

Prefixing: Positive to Negative

Below is a list of prefixes which, when added to words, generally denote the antonym.

in-

un-

il-

de-

ir-

dis-

14

Match the prefix above to the word in the list below to create the antonym (note: one item is a trick).

 specific structured rational valued decipherable sufficient literate legitimate reversible inspiring responsible affected biased redeemable regarded credible demanding logical explicable reconcilable intelligent

Note: One exception to this general rule are the terms “credible” and “incredible”. Incredible is not an antonym for credible, it is a superlative term, as in “*The Incredible Hulk*”, or “*You look incredible, darling*”.

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15

Using the words in the previous exercise, identify which are appropriate for use in giving feedback.

16

Choose one of the **bold** words to complete each sentence below.

- a Please cite more highly **regarded / valued** sources in your research.
- b In your assignment, you need to present a **rational / responsible** argument.
- c Your essay doesn't go into **sufficient / logical** detail.
- d As you have not referenced your sources, your paper does not appear to be very **credible / accountable**.
- e Without a **sufficient / specific** case study, it is difficult to comprehend the situation you describe.

Problem / Solution Phrases

The vocabulary below is used to either present a problem or describe a solution to a problem.

17 Match the problem / solution terms below:

reveal	difficulties
overcome	question / issue
experience	answer / solution
resolve	weaknesses
mitigate	shortcomings
raise	dilemma
come up with	problem
point to(wards)	impact

18 Using the matched phrases in the exercise above, complete the sentences below. The first sentence has been done for you. The numbers in brackets indicate the number of words required to correctly complete the sentence.

- a) The lecturer came up with a solution ⁽⁴⁾ to demonstrate the difficulty with false friends in English.

D

A

- b** A number of steps have been taken to [] [] [] (3).
- c** A number of studies have [] [] (2) in student satisfaction.
- d** The university has increased course fees to [] (1) the [] (1) of the fall in student numbers.
- e** It is important to understand why students [] [] (2) with time management.
- f** The number of students failing the end of term exam [] [] [] (3) in the structure and content of the course.
- g** Poor performance, attendance and concentration [] [] [] [] (4) whether the student is suitable for the course.
- h** With a little extra coaching, the student [] (1) the [] (1).
- i** The lecturer asked the class to [] (1) the hypothetical [] (1).

1

Subjective Answers. Possible answers may include:

- peer feedback (informal or formal)
- electronic feedback
- sample answers
- orally during labs or placement
- meetings with academic tutors

2

mediocre

tolerable

conventional

humdrum

unexceptional

hackneyed

simplistic

prosaic

banal

passable

pedestrian

unmemorable

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3

- (a) **It seems to me** that this sentence should come first.
- (b) **I think it might be more helpful** to include more detail in your report. / **I think it might have been more helpful** if you had included more detail in your report.
- (c) **My only criticism** is that you **could have** written more about this theory.
- (d) **At times** you repeat yourself. **Perhaps you could consider** changing your wording.
- (e) **I have noticed** that you have had **some difficulties** recently. You **could have** come to see me.

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4

- (a) The best age for learning a new language is, **apparently**, the teenage years.
- (b) There is **every likelihood** that the results will be published in September.
- (c) The situation concerning exams is **liable to** change in the near future.
- (d) Boys **tend to** be more interested in football than girls.
- (e) Pronouncing new sounds **presumably** comes easier to young children.
- (f) Starting revision early **is likely to** improve overall exam performance.
- (g) There is **a tendency for** mature students to take their studies more seriously.

5 DA

BADLY WRITTEN FEEDBACK	WELL WRITTEN FEEDBACK
<p>“You should have thought through your sequence more carefully.”</p> <p>Command</p>	<p>“It might have been better to think your sequence through more carefully.”</p> <p>Suggestion</p>
<p>“You did a poor job with the example problem.”</p> <p>Judgemental</p>	<p>“You worked through the example problem very quickly, and many students seemed confused.”</p> <p>Observation</p>
<p>“In a similar situation I would have ...”</p> <p>Teacher’s Perspective</p>	<p>“Perhaps next time you could try ...”</p> <p>Student’s Perspective</p>
<p>“You’re unfocussed!”</p> <p>Personality</p>	<p>“You presented an outline but you didn’t adhere to it, and I found it difficult to follow.”</p> <p>Behaviour</p>

6

Model answers are provided here, though responses may vary:

- **Good Student**

“You have performed very well this semester. Your work has consistently been of a high standard and I have been impressed by your contributions to class discussions and your mature approach to your studies. I have particularly enjoyed the originality you demonstrate in both your oral and written work. Keep up the excellent work!”

- **Bad Student**

“You seem to have acquired a better grasp of the material this semester. However, I have noticed that you frequently appear to be distracted in class and do not enjoy participating in group discussions. At times you have also failed to hand in assignments. I would like to see more dedication and commitment from you in the coming weeks.”

- **Struggling Student**

“Your valuable contributions to class discussions and enthusiasm regarding your studies have been commendable. I have noticed though that at times you appear to have difficulties to fully master certain complex concepts. Perhaps you could come and see me in my office hour to go over some tricky topics

DA

with me. In the meantime, I would recommend going back over the work we did at the start of the semester.”

7

- a “Omit this paragraph.” → **Command**
- b “You might consider omitting this paragraph.” → **Suggestion / Soliciting Cooperation**
- c “I wonder what you gain by including this paragraph / statement.” → **Patronising**

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8

- a Sarcastic
- b Sarcastic
- c Passing the Buck
- d Command / Boss / Editor
- e Patronising
- f Patronising / Dismissive
- g Passing the Buck
- h Mixed Messages
- i Command / Boss / Editor

9

Subjective Answer. Here are some example answers.

- a I **feel** that this paragraph is not necessary.
- b This section **seems rather** complex and difficult to understand. Perhaps try to reorganise it to make it clearer.
- c **It seems to me** that large parts of the topic were not quite clear to you. Please go back and remind yourself of the key points.
- d I **noticed** you had some difficulties mastering the basic topics. Please go back and review the work we have done.
- e I **feel** that greater effort **could have** been put into this.
- f **At times I had the impression** that you relied heavily on Wikipedia. Please consult a broader range of academic sources in the future.
- g **It seems to me** that you **could** benefit from more practise writing English.
- h If you are struggling, **perhaps** we can advise you **in some way**.
- i You have covered a great deal of ground. However, you **tend to** focus extensively on the details, which **at times** obscures your main arguments.

DA

10

“How can watching English language TV series and films be beneficial for learners of English.

Being in contact with the language and **acquainting** **acquiring** new vocabulary is one **part aspect** where learners of English benefit **in by watching TV series and films**. The other part where they of course benefit in is their pronunciation! **These two parts** **The two components / aspects** mentioned above are useful for learners when they want to improve their pronunciation of certain words or even want to **learn it in general**. In most **of the** cases they will pay attention to a native speaker in a film, for example, and they will **adapt adopt** his or her way of pronouncing certain words. Furthermore, by watching different international TV series and films, learners will come **in into** contact with different accents and dialects in the English language, that is **way far** more useful than just reading a text book. They can **administer these apply phrases** learned in their daily lives when **utilising using / speaking** English **if they want to**. Furthermore, this can be seen as a sort of listening exercise that they create by themselves. **(no connection to previous point)** Learners can choose on their own which part of a film or a TV series, **according to pronunciation**, they want to watch and **ameliorate improve** their speaking habits **in**.”

DA

There are a range of issues with the paragraph above:

- over-use of the same words
- mixing formal and informal registers
- incorrect punctuation such as the use of exclamation marks
- long sentences with no punctuation
- occasional lack of connection between sentences
- The last sentence is incomprehensible possibly because the writer has attempted to make simple statements sound complex.

11

Sloppy	Your arguments lack structure.
Lazy	Greater effort needs to be demonstrated in the future.
Superficial	Needs more detail.
Sweeping	This reads too general and could be applied too broadly.
Confusing	This is rather difficult to follow.
Get to the point!	Keep on track and do not lose sight of the key points.
You've missed the point.	I think you may have misunderstood the key premise of the topic.
Irrelevant	I cannot see how this information supports your argument.

DA
12

vague	precise
irrelevant	germane
dull	interesting
unconvincing	credible
unstructured	developed
long-winded	concise
clichéd	original
woolly	focussed

13

- a While your oral presentation contained a great deal of information, it was delivered in a rather **dull** manner.
- b The points you raised in your argument are very **germane** to our current situation.
- c Your conclusions were **focussed**, avoiding any unnecessary detail.
- d The stance you took in your argument was **vague**.
- e You provided a **concise** conclusion, nicely drawing your ideas to a close.
- f You have clearly put a lot of effort into writing your paper, however at times the content was **woolly**.
- g You put forward a **precise** argument to justify your point of view.
- h You took your initial idea and **developed** in a very logical way.
- i While you provided a **clichéd** solution to the question, it didn't show any original thinking.
- j Your essay was well written, but your overall argument **unconvincing**.

D

A

- Ⓚ Your presentation was **long-winded** and over-ran the allotted time slot.
- Ⓛ The case you put forward as an example is very **credible**.

14

unspecific

unstructured

irrational

unvalued

undecipherable

insufficient

illiterate

illegitimate

irreversible

uninspiring

irresponsible

unaffected

unbiased

irredeemable

disregarded

incredible

undemanding

illogical

inexplicable

irreconcilable

unintelligent

15

- (a) insufficient
- (b) uninspiring
- (c) unspecific
- (d) unstructured
- (e) illogical
- (f) indecipherable

DA

16

- a Please cite more highly **regarded** sources in your research.
- b In your assignment, you need to present a **rational** argument.
- c Your essay doesn't go into **sufficient** detail.
- d As you have not referenced your sources, your paper does not appear to be very **credible**.
- e Without a **specific** case study, it is difficult to comprehend the situation you describe.

17

reveal	shortcomings
overcome	problem
experience	difficulties
resolve	dilemma
mitigate	impact
raise	question / issue
come up with	answer / solution
point to(wards)	weaknesses

18

- a) The lecturer **came up with a solution** ⁽⁴⁾ to demonstrate the difficulty with false friends in English.
- b) A number of steps have been taken to **overcome the problem** ⁽³⁾.
- c) A number of studies have **revealed shortcomings** ⁽²⁾ in student satisfaction.
- d) The university has increased course fees to **mitigate** ⁽¹⁾ the **impact** ⁽¹⁾ of the fall in student numbers.
- e) It is important to understand why students **experience difficulties** ⁽²⁾ with time management.
- f) The number of students failing the end of term exam **points to weaknesses** ⁽³⁾ in the structure and content of the course.
- g) Poor performance, attendance and concentration **raises the question of** ⁽⁴⁾ whether the student is suitable for the course.
- h) With a little extra coaching, the student **overcame** ⁽¹⁾ the **problem** ⁽¹⁾.
- i) The lecturer asked the class to **resolve** ⁽¹⁾ the hypothetical **dilemma** ⁽¹⁾.

Glossary



General Glossary

A

accountable	verantwortlich
apparently	anscheinend, scheinbar

B

banal	banal, abgedroschen
-------	---------------------

C

concise	kurzgefasst
conventional	konventionell
conviction	Überzeugung
credible	glaubwürdig

E

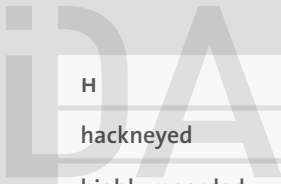
erratic	unberechenbar
every likelihood that ...	sehr wahrscheinlich, dass ...

F

flowing	fließend
---------	----------

G

germane	zugehörig
---------	-----------

**H**

hackneyed	abgedroschen
highly regarded	hoch angesehen
humdrum	eintönig

I

illogical	unlogisch
indecipherable	unlesbar
insufficient	unzureichend, mangelhaft
irrational	unvernünftig
irrelevant	unbedeutend, unwichtig
irreversible	unwiderruflich

K

key premise	zentrale / wichtig Prämisse
-------------	-----------------------------

L

laborious	arbeitsaufwendig
to be liable to	für etw. anfällig sein
long-winded	langwierig

M

mediocre	mittelmäßig
to mitigate	etw. abschwächen



mixed messages	widersprüchliche Botschaften, gemischte Signale
monotonous	eintönig, monoton

N

nebulous	nebulös
----------	---------

O

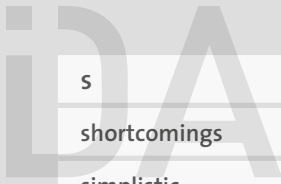
to omit	etw. weglassen
---------	----------------

P

to pass the buck (to s.o.)	jdm. die Verantwortung zuschieben, jdm. den schwarzen Peter zuschieben
passable	leidlich
patronising	herablassend
pedestrian	schwunglos, prosaisch
pertinent	einschlägig
precise	präzise
presumably	vermutlich
prosaic	prosaisch

R

to reveal	etw. aufzeigen
-----------	----------------



S

shortcomings	Mängel, Defizite
---------------------	------------------

simplistic	grob vereinfachend
-------------------	--------------------

sloppy	schlampig
---------------	-----------

smug	selbstgefällig
-------------	----------------

solid	robust
--------------	--------

specific	spezifisch
-----------------	------------

succinct	prägnant
-----------------	----------

sweeping	pauschal
-----------------	----------

T

to take s.th. into account	etw. berücksichtigen
-----------------------------------	----------------------

tendency for	Neigung
---------------------	---------

term	Begriff
-------------	---------

to tie up loose ends	lose Enden verknüpfen
-----------------------------	-----------------------

to the point	zur Sache, treffend
---------------------	---------------------

tolerable	tolerabel
------------------	-----------

U

unconvincing	nicht überzeugend
---------------------	-------------------

unexceptional	nichts Besonderes
----------------------	-------------------

unfitting	unpassend
------------------	-----------

unmemorable	nicht bemerkenswert
--------------------	---------------------

v

vague

vage

verbose

wortreich

w

woolly

schwammig