



- manner}?
- Timely {not unduly delayed if possible; time sensitive for optimization of impact?
  - Relevant-Significant-Important-Functional-Meaningful-Purposeful-Practical?
  - Informative...and does it include specificity in terms of any critique &/or suggestions?
  - Perhaps at times too harsh; too negative; too critical?
  - Perhaps too “sugar-coated” or too non-judgmental or too vague/too general? Does it contain trite expressions &/or phrases that have no depth; no teeth so to speak?
  - Concise and to the point or perhaps too effusive &/or too overwhelming for the recipient to reasonably digest the complete commentary?
  - Encouraging as to how best to improve-enhance-refine-elaborate on a preliminary draft?
  - Providing the recipient reasonable opportunity to evolve/resolve...with a reasonable timetable for revising editing suggestions?
  - Diagnostic-Prescriptive as necessary and appropriate and potentially helpful?
  - Indicative of a careful error-analysis...plus guidance {as necessary} to satisfactorily fix/correct/adjust mistakes, that might include mechanical errors-omissions-redundancies?
  - Effective in conveying new or additional or unique insights-perspectives-ideas-opinions; &/or posing potential alternate or alternative approaches {e.g. problem solving}?
  - Conveyed in blue-black-green ink or text font... and not in red since that color in particular denotes “bleeding” the paper with error citations?
  - Designed to help the student limit or further narrow or minimize the “gap” between current performance and your wish/hope/expectation of future desired/anticipated {improvement} status?
  - Personalized or customized or individualized to some extent...and does the instructor convey the necessity for subsequent evidence/proof that the student is sincerely/genuinely working towards a projected refinement/upgraded performance goal?
  - Focused on high {er} priority “content” matter and H-O-T-S {Higher Order Thinking Skills} or low {er} priority mechanical-technical-basic compliance issues...is the emphasis on content and ideas {What you write} or error correction {How you write}?
  - Aligned to previously agreed-upon rubrics and foundational analytics {e.g. addressing the assigned topic; permitted length of narrative; attuned to all preliminary/fundamental housekeeping type requirements; etc.}?
  - Reminding the student to proof-read and double-check entries before submission? {i.e. to promote greater self-regulation & self-management & self-checking opportunities}
  - Inclusive of both proximate and holistic elements?:
    - Proximate {Selective-Analytic focus on components}
      - Feedback provided in the text or margin as space permits/dictates
      - Might include specific suggestions &/or overtures to precisely correct mistakes
    - Holistic {Very Broad; Comprehensive}
      - Comments made at top of page or at end of assignment
      - Focus is on major points of writing/research
      - Focus is on the content or idea development {thesis or hypothesis}
  - Designed to impact future {short term &/or long term} student SLIPPAA variables?...Strengths-Likes-Interests-Preferences-Passions-Ambitions/Aspirations
  - Designed to encourage balanced evaluation and equilibrium...or is your commentary designed to be especially provocative or stimulating or “getting your attention” in some way?
  - Designed to protect student privacy and confidentiality and reputation; also awareness as to these issues if public scrutiny is conceivable {e.g. for pieces to be showcased; published; archived}?
- DASHBOARDS {aka- ‘LEARNER DASHBOARDS & LEARNER ANALYTICS’}
- The notion of a dashboard like device {e.g. graphic representation of status} to show progress monitoring- at a glance- has become increasingly popular in contemporary society. All types of information - both significant and even inconsequential - can be gathered and displayed for various stakeholders at the click of a mouse. Depictions of metrics and data points can be used to convey trend lines and outlines of flat-lines {holding steady} v. improvement or deterioration of performance. In essence, dashboard information can provide very useful *written feedback* when applied judiciously in the classroom or school {wide} setting. Graphic statistical summary information can certainly give a person an accurate explanation as to where they stand vis a vis a cohort of peers or when measuring performance/ productivity against some norm or well-established, well-regarded criteria.
- Class Dojo is one such Dashboard style tool/platform that is being utilized in many pedagogical settings these days. Teaching staff can control several ongoing and sometimes conflicting variables to regulate classroom dynamics for the benefit of {all} students. The “Dojo” toolkit offers numerous options, including the randomization of student groups, graphic noise meters, countdown timers, and class announcements/messages/ assignments/checklists, etc. Some schools even inform parents/guardians- in real time- of individual student progress/effort on predetermined objectives.

### About the Author—Larry Anderson



Laurance {Larry} joined the Long Island RSE-TASC team in January 2014. He came to the assignment with a 40+ year career spanning the public, non-public, independent, and faith-based educational sectors. He was Principal at the Jacob Gunther School {North Bellmore} from 1983 to his retirement from public education in 2005. Larry has held numerous leadership positions in diverse settings including pre-school, elementary, middle/junior high school, and high school levels and has also been an Adjunct Professor at Adelphi University at the graduate school division in special education. Mr. Anderson has a BBA degree from the City College of New York {CCNY-Baruch}, an MA degree from New York University {NYU} in Educational Psychology/Special Education, extensive post-masters graduate work in Learning Disabilities {LDT/C} and Administration/Supervision from Montclair State College/University and was previously enrolled in the NYU doctoral studies program in Organizational & Administrative Studies. He is thrilled to be affiliated with the RSE-TASC unit and for the opportunity to interact with so many outstanding and devoted educators that serve students with very special needs in the non-public school setting on Long Island. [Email Laurance Anderson](#)

KPI {Key Performance Indicators} software and data-analysis systems are “en vogue” these days and perhaps the ultimate wave of the future. They may or may not convey essential footnotes that sometimes are extremely beneficial in explaining acute performance stalls or spikes upwards or downwards in achievement.

#### SOLICITED v. UNSOLICITED WRITTEN FEEDBACK

*Written feedback* can be quite formal or rather informal depending on the circumstances, and typically as per the relationship between the sender and receiver of messages. Teachers may provide periodic written *feedback* guidance or insights or grades/assessment data via:

- Report Card evaluations
- Progress Form notations
- Quiz + Test grades
- Statewide Test results
- Standardized Test results
- Reports or projects {assignments} with narrative commentary and grading
- E-mail or text message statements {if authorized to do so}
- Post-It notes {essential highlights; brief key, noteworthy points}
- Letters; correspondence; {personal} notes
- School forms {including disciplinary records; commendations/tributes; PBIS type point-sheets}
- Advisory notices; reminders {To Do- Heads Up}
- Reference {letters}- e.g. {college recommendations; job applications; etc.} Etc.

Many types of written materials are pro-forma and just part of routine school communications protocol. They may include requisite quantitative/numerical/statistical/metric data as well as qualitative/subjective analysis and commentary.

Some written *feedback* for students is required by virtue of a de-facto job description detailed by sponsoring employers or organizations. However, some dialogue {eventually} is actually initiated by students who are curious about their performance or who perhaps require more in-depth guidance or mentoring or coaching. Some instructors routinely poll/survey their students to gauge their learning perspectives...some even utilize daily “exit ticket” type lesson/activity conclusion segments to assess student perspectives, topical issues/concerns, and may even encourage contemplation of suggestions. “Less teaching, more feedback equals better results.” Numerous researchers have espoused this theory including Hattie {2208}; Marzano, et al {2001}; etc.

#### GIVING STUDENTS THE MOST BENEFICIAL WRITTEN FEEDBACK

Dr. Susan Brookhart has written extensively on educational topics and is the author of an interesting guide entitled “Giving Students Effective Feedback” {ASCD.org Quick-Reference-Guides}. This is a helpful, laminated six-page resource tool for classroom personnel that highlights the following:

- Information that helps students take the “next steps” in the learning process
- Essential Questions for students to ponder...”Where Am I Going?; Where Am I Now?; Where to Next?”
- The basic importance of *feedback*
- Views of *Feedback*...micro & macro views; what did

the teacher + learner surmise from the *feedback* experience and did the *feedback* actually lead to eventual understanding-knowledge-application of skills?

- Messaging characteristics {as noted above}
- “*Feedback* as an Episode of Learning”
- “Improving Learning”- “Closing the *feedback* loop-using the *feedback* to make work better or deepen understanding while the student is still aiming toward the learning target- is the effective way to help *feedback* make a difference in student learning.”

My personal recommendation would be for all school personnel to consider-at least annually- their {written} *feedback* tendencies and approaches...and to make repertoire adjustments during the school term as will be helpful to the students they serve. It is vital to expend the time-energy-thoughtfulness to this endeavor to enhance student engagement methods and practical pedagogical techniques. The devotion to this self-reflection as to *feedback* practices should pay dividends going forward in gauging effective reaction dynamics...and the creation of some basic do's & don'ts to excel in this very critical role as an educator.



#### “HOWMYDOIN???”

The translation of this infamous quote often expressed by former NYC Mayor, Edward I. Koch, is of course How Am I Doing? Koch coined this classic inquiry phrase in an interview with NPR {National Public Radio} in 1981...and he really did want to know how others viewed his policy decisions and determinations. He was curious whether or not others were on board with his sense of thinking, accomplishment/s, progress or capability to make headway in {often} tumultuous times.

Many kids in a school setting are likewise interested in where they stand in the eyes of their peers and their teachers! An individual child may or may not have an accurate sense of their status vis a vis the views of others. Sometimes they have an inflated view and sometimes they devalue their accomplishments and/or potential...and sometimes they

are in the “Zone of Proximal Development” or that sweet-spot of self-assessment that more or less coincides with the views of {significant} others. In conclusion, what is your game-plan or action-plan when it comes to providing *written feedback* to your students? Hopefully, you will give periodic attention to reflecting on your strategies and techniques in this regard and dwell on the pros of your most effective methods and {also} perhaps some new procedures you might try out.

#### REFERENCES/RESOURCES

- ♦ Giving Students Effective Feedback {Susan M. Brookhart-2016}- [www.ASCD.ORG/QUICKREFERENCEGUIDES](http://www.ASCD.ORG/QUICKREFERENCEGUIDES)
- ♦ Visible Learning: Feedback {John Hattie & Shirley Clarke}- Routledge {2018}
- ♦ Seven Keys to Effective Feedback {Grant Wiggins-2012}- Educational Leadership
- ♦ 20 Ways to Provide Effective Feedback for Learning {Teach Thought Staff}- contributed by Laura Reynolds
- ♦ Five Research-Based Tips for Providing Students with Meaningful Feedback {Marianne Stenger-2014}- George Lucas Educational Foundation