

Instructional Feedback: A Step-By-Step Guide to Virtual Learning Environments

What is instructional feedback?

Instructional feedback is an effective strategy that can be used across learning domains (academic, behavior, and social). Instructional feedback is used after instruction has occurred to check understanding, provide error correction, and extend learning. This strategy is used as part of the learning process – a cue given such as directions or prompts, students participate, then feedback is provided. After receiving feedback, students have an opportunity to apply the corrections. Feedback focuses on the process and not merely the outcome or answer. Educators might ask, “how do you know?”, “what is your evidence?”, “how did you figure that out?”, “that’s a good idea, how else might you apply it?”. Providing timely and constructive feedback supports student's motivation to persist with new or difficult tasks which will be fundamental as students adjust to virtual learning environments.

How do I use this strategy in the virtual classroom?

In the table below, we provide steps for how to get started with instructional feedback in a virtual learning environment. Following the steps are a few quick tips and two illustrations, one for an elementary age student and for a middle and high school age student.

Steps	Description
1	Identify learning goals for the virtual learning module, lesson, or activity.
2	Provide instructions to meet the established goals.
3	Provide clear directions and check for understanding frequently and in multiple ways.
4	Incorporate opportunities for students to practice and teach them how they should expect to receive feedback during the module, session, or activity.
5	Implement active supervision and provide instructional feedback in large group, small groups in breakout rooms, or individually.
6	Provide time and direction for students to review work, access instructional feedback, and then have additional practice opportunities, as needed.
7	Reflect on virtual instructional practices.
8	Offer students an opportunity to give feedback on how instructional feedback is being offered in the virtual classroom.

Quick Tips for Success:

- Consider using visual reminders by sharing a slide on your screen.
- To check for understanding, use the polling feature, virtual reactions such as thumbs up, or the chat feature.

- Consider using breakout rooms, the chat feature, and technology tools such as Google’s Jam Board, Google docs, or other collaborative spaces to share student work and provide prompt feedback.
- Look for quick ways to reflect on your use of instructional feedback, for example you might look through your chat communication with students daily and note how often you gave instructional feedback. Consider using the [treatment fidelity](#) checklist from ci3t.org.
- To give students an opportunity to provide feedback, consider using the student [social validity](#) forms from ci3t.org.

Using Instructional Feedback in a Virtual Learning Environment

Example: With an elementary-age student...

Step 1. Eric’s teacher, Mr. Anderson, noticed that Eric had regular attendance and great participation during remote instruction, but he was often making the same mistakes in writing by not including transitions between thoughts. Mr. Anderson decided to set a goal for Eric during writing time to increase consistent use transitions.

Step 2. Mr. Anderson met with Eric in a breakout room and went over his goal as well as provided a mini lesson on transitional words and phrases. Mr. Anderson provide Eric with a visual prompt and list of sample transition words and phrases.

Step 3. Before he asked Eric to try on his own, they worked on a few examples together and Mr. Anderson provided checks for understanding including, “Where do you think the transition should go in this paragraph?”, “Is there a transition in this paragraph, or does it need one?” and “Which transition might fit best here?”

Step 4. Eric practiced writing a paragraph using transitions while Mr. Anderson stayed in the breakout room to help and model. as needed. Mr. Anderson planned time to provide feedback and then allow Eric to revise his writing, when needed.

Step 5. Mr. Anderson continued to watch as Eric independently identified places in paragraphs where transitions were, or where transitions needed to be added. Mr. Anderson provided feedback if Eric missed any as he worked or needed support deciding on a transitional word or phrase to use. Mr. Anderson also prompted Eric to use the transitions list and asked him to explain his thinking aloud so that he could provide Eric with clarifications on any misconceptions.

Step 6. When Eric was ready to practice independently, Mr. Anderson asked Eric to practice a few more examples while Mr. Anderson went to the main room to support other students. The teacher asked him to return to the main room when he wanted his teacher to examine his work. Once Eric returned, Mr. Anderson prompted Eric to use the transition list when Eric had missed a spot for a transition and praised him for placing transitions in appropriate places. He asked Eric to go back to the places where he needed to add a transition.

Step 7. Mr. Anderson reflected on the amount of feedback given to Eric by downloading the chat for the day as well listening to the class recording. (Recording was agreed upon by Eric’s parents and the school).

Step 8. At the end of the week, Mr. Anderson noticed an observable improvement in the flow of Eric’s writing and noted this to Eric. Mr. Anderson asked Eric if the feedback was helpful. He said, “I understand better how to use transition words when writing, and it makes me feel really good when I can fix my mistakes!”

Using Instructional Feedback in a Virtual Learning Environment

Example: With a middle or high school student...

Step 1. Victor’s reading teacher, Ms. Torres, identified the goals and objectives for the lesson of the day related to summarizing and critical thinking skills and considering multiple perspectives of characters in the novel they were reading as a class. The objectives were to succinctly present the main idea of the last chapter of the book, and to describe in detail the development and perspective of each character in the novel using a diagram or visual interpretation.

Step 2. Ms. Torres provided instructions on how to use reading strategies while reviewing the chapter before writing a summary and gave instructions and examples for how to illustrate the development of characters in the novel. Mrs. Torres took extra time in a breakout room to give Victor feedback on his summary of the previous chapter, and how he could make this next one more succinct and detailed.

Step 3. Ms. Torres provided clear directions to the whole class about the activity and let students know she would use the private chat feature to give corrective feedback during discussions. Mrs. Torres shared she would also give feedback to students individually as they were writing their summaries in their Google Doc using the suggesting mode. Then, Mrs. Torres asked students questions to confirm their understanding of the directions and to be able to clarify any misunderstandings before they began their independent work.

Step 4. To allow for practice with the feedback approaches, Ms. Torres asked student to open their Google Docs, share the document, and then add their heading and title. She left students a comment of praise for getting set up for their writing. She asked students to confirm they could see the feedback comment in the document, using the reaction thumbs up.

Step 5. Students working in small group breakout rooms to complete their summaries and graphics. Ms. Torres used active supervision and visited every room, taking the opportunity to listen and provide immediate feedback on what students were working on. She used the private chat to correct students, and she sent Victor a private message encouraging him to check that his graphic contained all the characters, as she noticed a couple were missing when he was sharing his screen with the group. Once Victor started editing his graphic, Ms. Torres quickly gave him behavior specific praise his engagement and left a comment in his Google

Doc. She also praised the small group for following directions and giving each other respectful feedback.

Step 6. After Ms. Torres provided feedback to all students throughout the activity, she let her students know they would have ten minutes to reflect on how they did, and review feedback they received during the activity. She asked students to make sure they incorporated the feedback she gave them on their illustrations of the characters before turning in their work.

Step 7. Ms. Torres reflected on her use of feedback that day. She kept count of how many times she provided feedback to her students during the lesson and reflected on how she delivered the feedback and the type of feedback given. She wanted to make sure she was providing feedback on the process of learning and also allowed students to revise their work using the feedback offered. She used a treatment integrity checklist to monitor her own use of instructional feedback so she could check her use of the strategy over time.

Step 8. At the end of the day, Ms. Torres noticed Victor incorporated her feedback on the graphic and asked him how it was for him to receive feedback virtually. Victor said, “I liked your input while I was working. Thank you for the private reminders and making comments directly in my document.” Ms. Torres asked Victor and the rest of the class to complete a brief social validity form to collect data on his opinion on the use of instructional choice.

Watch a brief introduction to instructional feedback [here](#) and watch the updated video for [here](#).

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