Teacher's notes

Give feedback (1)

Special Edition
C21 ENGLISH FOR THE 21st CENTURY
B1 Pre-intermediate / B1+ Intermediate

Warm up

Elicit some situations in which students give or receive feedback – information about how well something has been done. They could be academic or non-academic situations. Follow up by asking for some specific comments students have received – good or bad. How did the comments make them feel? Did they have the intended impact? For example, did they help students to change or improve their work, or to feel more confident?

Using the Factsheet

There are three possible ways to use the Factsheet:

1. Give students the Factsheet before the lesson, so they can read it at home and come to the lesson prepared to do the Worksheet. If you use this approach, start the lesson by checking that all students have read and understood the Factsheet, and answer any questions.
2. Give students the Factsheet at the beginning of the lesson and start by working through it with the students.
3. Focus on the Worksheet in the lesson, then give students the Factsheet at the end of the lesson, so they can take it home and keep it as a reference or revision tool.

Theory to practice

- If students have done the Factsheet at home, check their understanding of this section and elicit a few answers.

Transcript

01

A I thought your talk was boring. You need to make it more exciting.
B Really? I didn't realize.
A Yeah. The slides were poor, to be honest.
B I thought they were OK.
A Yeah, and make better handouts. I hated them.
B My tutor liked them. You're wrong.
A Sure. Try putting in more pictures. People don't like just reading.

Using the Worksheet

Practice

1 Look at the comments by tutors and students and discuss the questions.

- Have a short whole-class discussion about what kind of feedback comments a student might hear from a tutor.
- Ask students to read the comments and discuss the questions.
- While students are working, walk around the class to monitor and assist where necessary.
- Get some pairs to share their answers with the whole class.
- Ask students to use the comments in pairs and think of suitable replies.
- Get some pairs to share their ideas with the whole class.

Suggested answers

1. Tutorial – tutor to student
2. Seminar – student to student
3. Presentation – student to student
4. Seminar – tutor to student
5. Tutorial – student to tutor
6. Essay – tutor to student
7. Essay – student to student
8. Presentation – tutor to student

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2 **Read the list of reasons to give feedback. Rank them in importance from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important).**

- Put students in pairs.
- Ask them to work though the list, discussing how valid each reason is.
- While students are working, walk around the class to monitor and assist where necessary.
- Get some pairs to share their answers with the whole class.
- Have a short whole-class discussion about the reasons and ways of ranking them. Explore why different students chose their particular rankings.

Answers

There are various different ways of ranking the reasons. However, giving feedback to make someone feel bad is always incorrect.

3 **Read a student's feedback about his academic activities and discuss the questions that follow.**

- Put students in pairs.
- Get students to look at the feedback comments.
- Ask students to discuss the questions in pairs.
- While students are working, walk around the class to monitor and assist where necessary.
- Get some pairs to share their answers with the whole class.
- Have a short whole-class discussion about the problems, students' overall assessment and possible advice for Jack.

4 **02 Read and listen to the conversations between Jack and two of his friends. Discuss the questions that follow.**

- Put students in pairs.
- Ask students to listen to and follow the conversations. Play 02.
- Tell students to discuss and answer the questions for each dialogue in turn.
- While students are working, walk around the class to monitor and assist where necessary.
- Get some pairs to share their answers with the whole class.
- Have a short whole-class discussion about students' understanding of what the voices sound like and about politeness generally.
- Discuss any other points that arise. You could give students some time to role-play the conversations here or in Exercise 5.

Suggested answers

a Conversation 1 is rude. Conversation 2 is more polite.

b Jack's response is defensive and negative in Conversation 1. In Conversation 2, he is much more positive – accepting the criticism.

c Negative words/expressions include: *really bad, terrible, isn't good, so lazy, so rude, wrong, nonsense, problem, never answer, aren't winning any prizes, never participate, not fair, really lazy.*

d In Conversation 1, Bea is aggressive and Jack is defensive. In Conversation 2, Yasmin is kind and understanding, and Jack reciprocates.

e/f Conversation 1's criticism isn't effective because Jack doesn't agree with the comments and won't improve. Conversation 2's criticism is more effective because Jack does accept the comments and agrees to improve and make changes.

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Transcript

02

Conversation 1

Bea It's really bad, Jack. They'll kick you out!
Jack Why do you say that?
Bea Well. You're terrible in seminars. Your preparation isn't good. You're so lazy. And … you're so rude to others. You keep interrupting!
Jack You're wrong! I'm not lazy. You're talking nonsense.
Bea You have a problem with your essays. You don't do any background reading. The tutor's right, you never answer the questions.
Jack Huh? Your essays aren't winning any prizes.
Bea Then there's the projects. You don't do any work. You can't work with other students.
Jack Nonsense. Teamwork is one of my best skills.
Bea You don't ask any questions in lectures. You never participate!
Jack That's not fair!
Bea And you don't work hard enough. You're really lazy.
Jack Right, that's it. I'm going!

Conversation 2

Yasmin Well, how do you think you did?
Jack I guess I can do better.
Yasmin You made some really good points in that last seminar. However, you could probably interrupt a little less. What do you think?
Jack Yeah, perhaps I do interrupt sometimes. I'll think about that in future seminars.
Yasmin Good idea. It's difficult to find time to do all the work, but I'm sure you could do a little more reading for essays in the future. That might improve your grades, don't you think?
Jack Yes, you're right. It should result in answering the question better, too.
Yasmin Definitely. I see they really like your project topics! I know it's difficult to work in a team sometimes, but perhaps you could spend more time with the team to try to improve.
Jack I agree. Maybe a few more meetings would help.
Yasmin Sounds like a good idea. They really like your timekeeping and organization, I see. Not asking questions is a bit of an issue for them. What would you say?
Jack Yeah. I get a little nervous asking in front of everyone. Maybe I should ask after the lecture.

TIP

Get students to look at the tip. Get one of the students to read the tip aloud for the whole class. Check understanding and answer any questions.

5 **Softer feedback is usually more effective. Find examples of the following strategies in Conversation 2.**

- Go through the list of functions and elicit a few examples from the class.
- Ask students to find other examples in Conversation 2.
- While students are working, walk around the class to monitor and assist where necessary.
- Get some pairs to share their answers with the whole class.
- Ask students to role-play the conversations in pairs, thinking about body language and voice.
- Get some pairs to role-play a conversation for the whole class.

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Suggested answers

a *You made some really good points in that last seminar. / Good idea. / Yes, you're right. / I see they really like your project topics! / They really like your timekeeping and organization, I see.*

b *… but perhaps you could spend more time … / However, you could probably interrupt a little less.*

c *However, you could probably interrupt a little less. / … I'm sure you could do a little more reading … / That might improve your grades … / … perhaps you could spend more time with the team …*

d *Well, how do you think you did? / What do you think? / That might improve your grades, don't you think? / What would you say?*

e *However, you could probably interrupt a little less. / … I'm sure you could do a little more reading for essays in the future. / Not asking questions is a bit of an issue for them.*

f *Well, how do you think you did? / What do you think? / What would you say?*

g *I know it's difficult to work in a team sometimes … / It's difficult to find time to do all the work …*

h *However, you could interrupt a little less. / … you could do a little more reading for essays in the future. / … perhaps you could spend more time with the team to try to improve.*

6 Soften the feedback using the strategies in Exercise 5.

- Get students to work on this individually.
- Walk around the class to monitor and assist where necessary.
- Elicit some possible answers.
- Accept any reasonable softening using the functions from Exercise 5.

TIP

Get students to look at the tip. Get one of the students to read the tip aloud for the whole class. Check understanding and answer any questions.

7 Take turns role-playing one of the feedback scenarios and record your conversations. Listen to other people's conversations. In groups, present your feedback on what was good, what could be better and any suggestions you have.

- Ask students to write a dialogue using one of the scenarios.
- If time is short, ask students to prepare and practise without writing beforehand.
- Walk around the class to monitor and assist where necessary.
- Tell students to practise performing with the correct intonation and body language.
- Each pair should perform their conversation for another pair.
- Suggest each pair record their own conversation so they can reflect on it later.
- Each pair should take turns giving feedback on the others' conversation.
- Get some pairs to perform their conversation for the whole class.

Reflect

8 In pairs, listen to a recording of your conversation in Exercise 7. Could you improve your feedback?

- Ask students to listen to their own conversation in pairs.
- Tell them to make notes on how they think they did in their conversation.
- Ask some pairs to tell the class about their conversation and what changes they would make next time.

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Learning outcome

By the end of the lesson, students should:

- know about using positive comments in feedback
- understand what language makes feedback softer and more effective
- be aware of how their intonation and body language impact the effectiveness of the feedback
- be able to give effective feedback to others

Ending the lesson

Have a whole-class discussion about what students learnt in the lesson. Answer any questions.
Get students to work in small groups to prepare a poster about giving feedback.

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