

How to Give Reflective Feedback

Reflective feedback begins with listening or looking for what is working, what strengths are at play, and what potential is being witnessed.

- **Value or value-potential statements:** Reinforce, build, and preserve positive features such as thinking, beliefs, actions, behaviors, and impact.
- **Reflective questions:** Communicate concerns and considerations toward improvement to include any clarifications of an idea, event, name, or action. Use language that expands current thinking.

All reflective feedback requires time, thought, and consideration. This will be interpreted as thoughtfulness, respect, and honesty. Reflective feedback, as illustrated in the following examples, must always start with expressing *value* or *value-potential statements* (VS) of the act and be followed by *reflective questions* (RQ) that highlight potential concerns or suggestions or expand thinking. The following examples provide language demonstrating reflective feedback that uses value or value-potential statements and reflective questions.

- **To a teacher:** “You’ve shown an impressive ability to create engaging lessons that keep students curious [VS]. Your questioning technique encouraged deeper thinking during the discussion [VS]. What aspects of this approach are you noticing are most effective in driving your students’ engagement [RQ]?”
 “You have a clear strength in connecting with students through inquiry-based teaching [VS]. When you explore differentiated questioning strategies to reach diverse learners, what do you notice about their impact [RQ]?”
- **To a student:** “You demonstrated strong problem-solving skills in the way you approached that mathematics challenge. You didn’t give up when you hit a tough spot, which really showed your resilience [VS]! Your ability to stay focused and work through difficult problems is impressive and holds the potential for exploring new strategies and asking more questions when you’re stuck [VS]. What are you thinking you want to try next time [RQ]?”
- **To a parent:** “It’s clear you are deeply committed to supporting your child’s learning. We see the positive impact of your involvement in helping him stay organized and prepared for class [VS]. Your commitment to your child’s success is invaluable. By exploring opportunities for collaborative strategies with your child, like setting joint goals for study time, you will no doubt build even more independence [VS]. How are you thinking that approach might work for your family [RQ]?”
- **To a fellow teacher:** “You have such a welcoming atmosphere in your classroom. The rapport you’ve built is so evident and really fosters such a safe and positive environment [VS]. Your ability to connect with students is a real strength and holds the potential for greater engagement and stronger relationships [VS]. When you use peer collaboration techniques, what do you notice about how they connect and support one another [RQ]?”

Notice that all the language demonstrates the use of presuming positive intent. The receiver is probably already thinking about it, doing it, and wanting it!