

JOURNEYS

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Literacy Link: Moving Forward- Journeys

Framing Difficult Feedback for Parents by: Joe Hirsch

As educational partners, teachers and parents (or guardians) share responsibility for the success of children. Keeping open lines of communication is essential to maintaining a relationship of transparency and trust. Parents expect and deserve honest feedback about their children's progress. But when situations call for difficult conversations, teachers can become apprehensive. Will hearing negative feedback about their kids make parents defensive or supportive? Point fingers or lend a hand? Brain research shows that negative feedback floods neural pathways with cortisol, the stress-inducing hormone, and triggers our threat awareness. How can teachers give parents the information they need to know but might not want to hear? A standard approach is the praise sandwich or feedback sandwich, which attempts to sidestep blame, conflict, and hurt feelings by surrounding negative feedback with positive statements. After opening with praise ("Johnny is so energetic"), the teacher brings up a specific critique ("With all that energy, he can become quite disruptive in class"), and closes on a positive note ("But he adds so much to our learning community"). While this tactic remains popular, it's not always effective: Since people tend to remember the first and last things they hear, they focus on the praise at the ends and not the critique in the middle. The sandwich delivery softens the message and doesn't necessarily drive it home.

A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO DIFFICULT FEEDBACK

An alternative might look more like a bundle. Rather than buffering negative feedback with praise, teachers can offer direct feedback that comprises specific observations and value statements:

- **Context:** Where and when is the behavior happening?
- **Observations:** What has happened?
- **Emotions:** What feelings does this cause?
- **Value:** Why does this matter?
- **Input:** What can be done to achieve success?

First, teachers establish a feedback context by naming the time and place the problem is happening. Next, they provide specific and objective observations about the problem in action. From there, they describe the impact of the problem on the emotions of others and its value to the group as a whole. Finally, they seek active input from the parents on how a positive and productive solution can be reached. In the case of the excitable but disruptive Johnny, here's an example of how the teacher can give his parents more productive feedback using the bundle approach:

"Mr. and Mrs. Jones, I want to mention some concerns I have about the way Johnny is behaving during class [context]. In the past two weeks, he's been calling out frequently during small-group instruction. He also riles up his classmates during transitions [observations]. As his teacher, I'm concerned that Johnny is falling behind in his class work and frustrating his friends [emotions], which is detrimental to the learning environment we're trying to create [value]. Can you offer any ideas about why this is happening and how we can help Johnny improve [input]?"

JOURNEYS

Differentiation

Ways to Differentiate Learning Utilizing Journeys Materials

- ◆ Weekly Leveled Readers & Vocabulary Readers
- ◆ Strategic Intervention Lessons & Leveled Reader Lessons
- ◆ Write-In Reader
- ◆ Literacy Centers & Independent Reading and Response Activities
- ◆ Intensive Interventions— Decoding Power
- ◆ Vocabulary Context Cards
- ◆ Literacy and Language Guide Activities
- ◆ Leveled Spelling Lists (Literacy & Language Guide)
- ◆ Cold Reads
- ◆ Progress Monitoring Assessments
- ◆ Language Support Cards (ELL)
- ◆ Curious About Words: Intensive Oral Vocab Instruction
- ◆ Interactive Whiteboard Lessons
- ◆ Graphic Organizers
- ◆ Audio Hub Resources

**** Don't forget about PRESS class wide and targeted interventions. ****

WAYS TO DIFFERENTIATE CONTENT, PROCESS, AND PRODUCT

Same Goals Different Materials

Students focus on the same lesson but work with different materials. For example, some students may need a simplified version of a challenging text, others may need to read instructions in their native language, and others may need to hear an audio recording of a selection as they read the text.

Same Goals Different Products

Students focus on the same essential goals but express their ideas in different forms. For example, students could demonstrate understanding of a character through a written character sketch, a spoken monologue, or a portrait that includes critical details.

Same Goals Different Applications

Students work on the same essential goals but find applications in different areas. For example, one student might bring in examples of first- and third-person point of view from advertisements, while another might find examples in favorite song lyrics. This kind of flexibility increases student motivation.

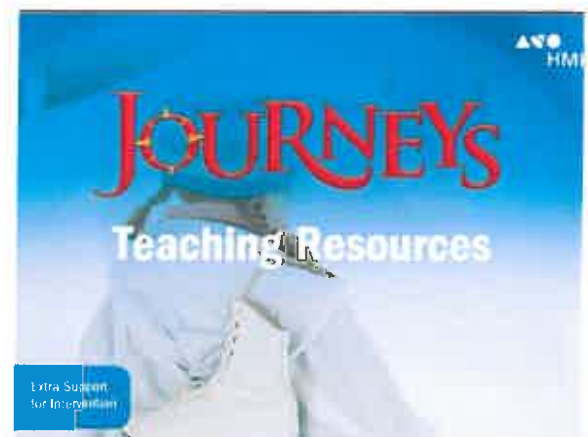
Same Goals Different Directions

Students pursue the same goal but with directions granted to their learning needs. When studying character motivation, for example, you might ask some students to find evidence in the story that shows why a character acted as he or she did. You might raise the difficulty level a bit by asking other students to describe how the same motivating forces could have affected another character in a completely different way.

Different Goals

Students work on different goals related to the same lesson to address their particular needs. For instance, as part of a writing assignment tied to the lesson, you might direct some students to focus on organization of ideas, others to concentrate on precision of wording, and others to target supporting their opinions effectively.

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Differentiation Strategy

Boomerang Bookmarks (Comprehension)

Strategies for Understanding and Remembering

Boomerang Bookmarks

(2-6)

Some students become engrossed in their reading, while others read more superficially. Boomerang Bookmarks are tools that assist students to stay engaged and attend to the content as they read. In addition, when students return to their reading at a later time, they can refer to the bookmarks to remind them of the content. Because the bookmarks are available in three different levels, teachers can match them to a student's readiness level.

Materials

Boomerang Bookmarks (see reproducibles, pages 144-146)

Water-based, wipe-off markers (if laminating)

How To

1. Decide whether or not to laminate the bookmarks. Laminating allows students to write with wipe-off markers and reuse the bookmarks. The bookmarks do not need to be laminated if a permanent product is desired (for a portfolio or to send home).
2. Determine the appropriate level of bookmark for each student.
3. Introduce the Boomerang Bookmarks to the students within leveled reading groups, and explain that they will be writing on their bookmarks in response to their reading.
4. Demonstrate how to use the bookmark appropriate to the level of the group, and monitor the groups during the first experience. If students are successful with their use, then direct students to use them at independent reading times.

Boomerang Bookmarks

Name _____

Directions:

Write a question for _____ of the question words below.

Who

What

When

Where

Why

How

Name _____

Directions:

Write a question for _____ of the question words below.

Who

What

When

Where

Why

How

Boomerang Bookmarks

Name _____

Directions:

Answer _____ of the questions below.

Who is it about?

What happened?

When did it happen?

Where is the story taking place?

Why did it happen?

How did the character feel?

Name _____

Directions:

Answer _____ of the questions below.

Who is it about?

What happened?

When did it happen?

Where is the story taking place?

Why did it happen?

How did the character feel?

Boomerang Bookmarks

Name _____

Name _____

Directions:

Answer _____ of the questions below.

Directions:

Answer _____ of the questions below.

Who is it about?



Who is it about?



What happened?



What happened?



When did it happen?



When did it happen?



Where is the story taking place?



Where is the story taking place?



Why did it happen?



Why did it happen?



How did the character feel?



How did the character feel?



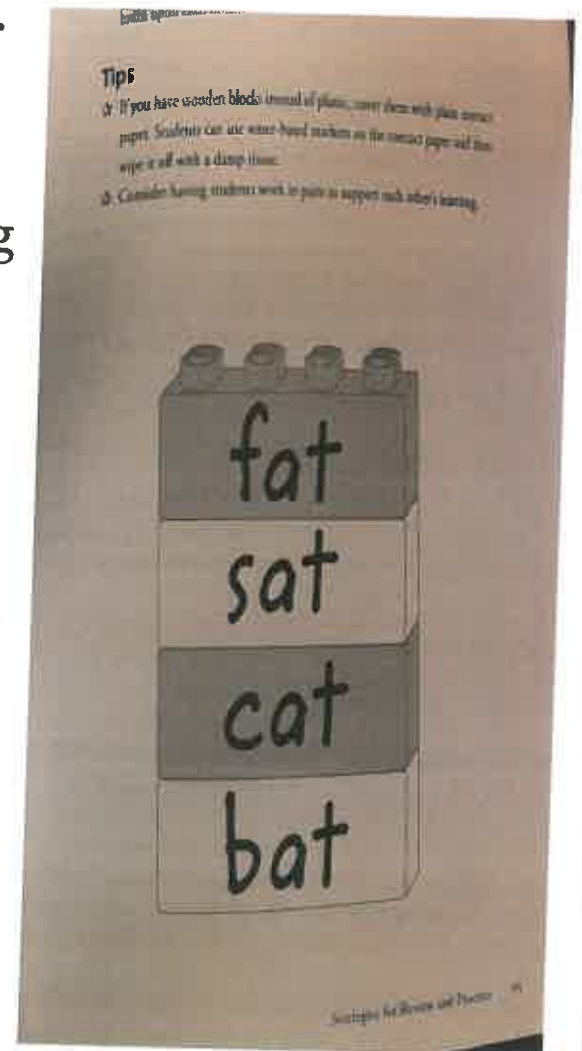
Differentiation Strategy

Pattern Tower (Phonics/Vocabulary/Math)

Fun way to learn things such as word families, counting, rhyming, roots/suffixes, parts of speech, vocabulary words & synonyms, etc.

Materials: Plastic Building blocks, such as Legos & wipe-off markers

1. Write a word or phrase on one of the blocks.
2. Show students how to connect another block to the top of the first. Then demonstrate how to add the next word or number depending on the skill being practiced.
3. Instruct students to write as many words as they can think of, building a tall tower.
4. When finished, rinse off blocks and repeat.
5. Could use this for grouping or categorizing words as well.



Differentiation Resources/Websites

- * 3 Myths & 3 Truths about DI: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/differentiated-instruction-myths-and-truths-john-mccarthy>
- * Four Ways to Differentiate in the Classroom: <http://inservice.ascd.org/four-ways-teachers-can-differentiate-in-the-classroom/>
- * Six Differentiation Strategies for New Teachers: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/blog/2015/04/01/6-differentiation-strategies/>
- * Strategies that Differentiate Instruction: <http://www.give2all.org/pdf/differentiate/o.pdf>
- * Differentiate Writing in Grades K-2: <https://learningattheprimarypond.com/blog/how-to-differentiate-writing-instruction-in-k-2/>

50 the **Ultimate List of DIFFERENTIATION Strategies**

50 STRATEGIES FOR DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum Mapping	26. Game-Based Learning
2. Inquiry-Based Learning	27. Identity Chart
3. Power Standards & Enduring Understandings	28. Grouping
4. Project-Based Learning	29. Socratic Seminar
5. Classroom Layout & Design	30. Problem-Based Learning/Place-Based Education
6. Learning Model Integration	31. Learning Blends
7. Sentence & Discussion Stems	32. Write-Around
8. Tiered Learning Targets	33. Genius Hour
9. Learning Through Play	34. Rubrics
10. Meaningful Student Voice & Choice	35. OFT Seminar
11. Learning Badges	36. Learning Menus
12. Relationship-Building & Team-Building	37. Cubing
13. Self-Directed Learning	38. Layering
14. Choice Boards	39. Jigsaws
15. Bloom's Twist	40. Graphic Organizers
16. Assessment Design & Backwards Planning	41. Learning Through Workstations
17. Sine Teaching	42. Concept Attainment
18. Double-Entry Journal/Essay Writing	43. Flipped Classroom
19. Analogies, Metaphors & Visual Representations	44. Mentoring
20. Reciprocal Teaching	45. Planning Through Learning Taxonomies
21. Mock Trial	46. Debate
22. The Hot Seat/Role-Play	47. Student Interest & Inventory Data
23. Student Data Inventories	48. Learning Feedback
24. Mastery Learning	49. Mini-Lessons
25. Goal Setting & Monitoring	50. Class Rules

