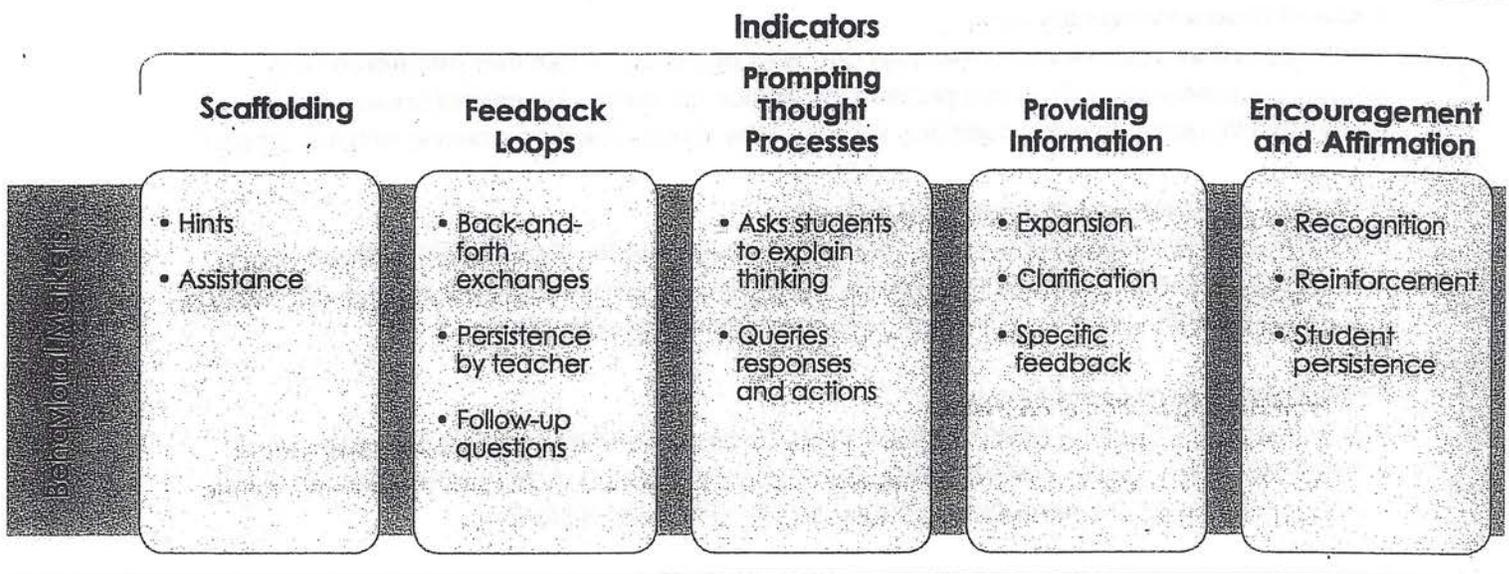


Quality of Feedback



What is it?

Children learn the most when they are consistently given feedback that expands their knowledge or builds on their performance of a task. Feedback works best when it helps children to refine their knowledge and gets them to understand how they came up with their ideas, rather than simply focusing on getting the right answer. Effective feedback provides children with specific, expansive information, related to their work or something they said, that helps them reach a deeper understanding of concepts than they could get on their own.

Why is it important?

Effective feedback helps children obtain a deeper understanding of concepts and provides motivation for children to stay engaged in, and get the most from, lessons and activities. By intentionally looking for every occasion to provide meaningful feedback to children, teachers create many more learning opportunities throughout the day.

How can I improve the quality of feedback I provide?

Focus on the process of learning.

When children give correct answers, use this as an opportunity to create a learning moment by asking follow-up questions such as, "How did you know that?" or "How did you figure that out?"

Scaffold learning.

If a child is having a hard time understanding a concept or coming up with an answer, provide hints to help her get to the answer rather than just telling her or moving to another child. For example, you may begin by asking a child an open-ended question related to a topic. If he doesn't respond, clarify the concept and give him a range of possible answers or things to think about. If he is still unable to answer, try simplifying your questioning to something more concrete, like a yes or no question, to support the child in responding.

Provide specific information about why answers are correct or incorrect.

Rather than telling children "nice job" or "good work," give them specific information about why their answers are correct or incorrect. This not only provides the child with more information, but it also may help other children who weren't sure of the correct answer.

Engage in "feedback loops".

Some of the best feedback occurs when teachers ask a series of follow-up questions to elicit a deeper understanding from children. After a child responds, ask another question of that child or of the whole class. Keep this conversational "feedback loop" going until you are sure children really understand what you are trying to teach.

Give lots of specific feedback.

Always be on the lookout for opportunities to provide feedback to children. Walk around the classroom when children are working independently. Take the time to listen and respond in a thoughtful way to what children have to say during group lessons.

Encourage children to persist in their work.

Recognize and praise children's efforts and encourage them to persist in thinking about something or completing a task. For example, you might say to children who are working on a large floor puzzle, "I see how hard you are working on that big puzzle. With teamwork, I know you guys will be able to do it. Call me over if you need any help!"