



Greater Good in Education  
SCIENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR KINDER, HAPPIER SCHOOLS

# GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

*"True humility is being able to accept criticisms as graciously as we accept compliments."*

*—Sabrina Newby*

## OVERVIEW

Students take turns providing feedback to one another, reflecting on their own skills, and setting growth goals for themselves.

## PLANNING FOR IT

### WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- To help students identify areas of personal growth
- To help students cultivate humility
- To encourage a receptiveness to feedback
- To encourage sportsmanship
- Any time

### TIME REQUIRED

- <15 minutes

### LEVEL

- Middle School
- High school

### MATERIALS

- Index cards
- Pencil/Pen

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

- Students will:
  - Identify strengths and areas for growth of their peers
  - Propose ideas to their peers for how to improve in their skills
  - Identify their own strengths and areas for growth
  - Set goals for themselves
  - Reflect on their goals and how they might attain them

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

- [Making Practices Culturally Responsive](#)
- [Making Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered](#)

## CHARACTER STRENGTHS

- Humility
- Reflection
- Practical Wisdom

## SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

## MINDFULNESS COMPONENTS

- Focused Attention
- Open Awareness
- Non-Judgment

## HOW TO DO IT

### REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

- Identify a skill you want to improve (this could be related to your physical activity or something else).
- Ask a friend to practice with you and to provide you with feedback.
- Afterwards take the time to reflect on how you did, your strengths and areas for growth.
- Set a goal for yourself for how you would like to improve the next time you practice that skill.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Start by engaging students in a short discussion about giving and receiving feedback, why it's important, and how to do so effectively. Some possible questions include:
  - *Why is feedback important?*
  - *What is an example of helpful and/or harmful feedback?*
  - *How do you like to receive feedback?*

- *When you receive feedback, how does it feel? Is it hard to take? Do you welcome feedback? How might you change your response toward feedback?*
- Emphasize to students that the purpose of this exercise is not to compete with each other, but rather to improve their own skills.
- Let students know that they will be engaging in a task/drill with a partner. The goal will be for each pair to take turns in practicing the task/drill and giving feedback.
- Introduce students to the particular task/drill that you would like them to work on.
- Begin by modeling the task/drill for students.
- Next, either verbally or in written language, describe the specific features and criteria of the skill that students should try to reach.
- Pair students up and assign one student to go first while the other student observes and provides feedback by answering the following questions:
  - *What is your partner doing well?*
  - *What could your partner improve on and how might they go about doing so?*
- After four minutes (or the amount of time you consider appropriate for the task/drill), have students alternate in their roles. Note that students should perform the task/drill multiple times, if possible, so that they can incorporate their partner's feedback.
- Once all students have practiced the task/drill, have them write a short reflection on an index card answering the following questions:
  - *What did I do well?*
  - *What could I improve on?*
  - *What is my goal for next time, and how might I attain this goal?*
  - *How might I support other students, including my partner, in improving their skills?*
- Close with a brief discussion about their experience with this exercise. Some possible questions include:
  - *What was helpful about giving and/or receiving feedback? What was challenging?*
  - *What did you learn about yourself through this exercise?*
  - *Would you change anything about this process? If so, what?*
  - *What advice might you give to someone offering and/or receiving feedback?*
- The next time students practice this task/drill, allow them a few minutes at the start to look over their index card.

## REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

- How did students respond to this feedback and reflection process?
- Have you noticed any changes in the ways students interact with one another?
- Do you notice any changes in your students' displays of humility?
- Have you noticed any positive changes in your student's ability to analyze ethical dilemmas and make positive moral choices? ?

## THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

### EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

A [study](#) done with 157 Greek students ages 11-13 found that a six-week physical education intervention that focused on creating a non-competitive climate among students increased students' moral reasoning. As part of

the intervention students practiced giving each other feedback, with an emphasis on setting goals at the start of a lesson based on individual performances rather than comparisons with other students.

Furthermore, [research](#) suggests that deliberate reflection can strengthen moral character, particularly by increasing individuals' practice of humility.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Helping students to understand and decide between right and wrong, or moral reasoning skills, is a key facet of education. To quote Martin Luther King, Jr., "The function of education... is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason, but with no morals."

Research has found that student athletes who judge their skills according to their own level of competence rather than comparing themselves to others show more respect for [good sportsmanship](#), sports officials, and opponents, and for their own [commitment](#) towards the sport—all things that help cultivate a strong moral foundation.

Humility is also key to moral development. Research shows that as children grow, they become better able to [notice and appreciate humility](#), making them gravitate toward others who are humble. Thus, cultivating humility in students is important as it can help them develop stronger relationships with others. Furthermore, research has found that humility is a common trait in [purposeful](#) young people, suggesting that it might support children in achieving their long-term life goals. Students who show greater humility also show greater [intrinsic motivation and receptiveness to feedback](#), qualities that are important to students' academic success and persistence in sports.

## SOURCE

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