What Makes this TEAM Reflection Paper Successful?

Some specific examples/evidence that <u>contributed</u> to the success of this paper are provided below.

Module Three: Instruction   Grade: K-3   Subject: Special Education

Criteria I: Development of New Learning (*How the teacher developed new learning and what was learned*)

How the teacher developed new learning:

- Read *The Power of Feedback* by Hattie and Timperley, *Classroom Best Practices: Providing Feedback to Students in the Classroom* and *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students* by Susan Brookhart
- Observed two colleagues and focused on their use of feedback

What the teacher learned:

- "From *Classroom Best Practices: Providing Feedback to Students in the Classroom*, I learned about different ways of providing feedback and involving students in the process. I gained that feedback should be corrective and provide students with something to fix."
- "The teacher's use of the rubric appeared to be more effective than how I was using the reading fluency rubric. I realized then that I needed to review the reading fluency rubric and state the desired scores to students prior to reading."
- "Hattie and Timperley state that feedback should be immediate and could be as simple as two sentences during instruction. This suggestion made me consider that feedback wouldn't detract from the small amount of instructional time I have with each student."

Criteria II: Impact on Practice (*How the teacher's practice is different*)

- "The first change I made was to adjust my current use of feedback. I stopped only using the phrase 'good job' and started providing verbal feedback to my students in which I commented on how they did something appropriate/correct. My comments included statements such as 'Nice work getting your mouth ready to read' and 'I like how you just self-corrected the word apple.'"
- "In addition to providing specific verbal feedback I wanted to include a visual tool. I started using a reading fluency rubric with students A and B. The rubric assessed students in the categories of volume, smoothness, pace, expression, and preparedness."
- "I took Brookhart's idea of 'mini' goals and the data sheet and implemented them into my lessons … the data sheet steered my feedback. I was able to provide positive feedback about their success with their mini goal and corrective feedback in regards to strategies to try to be more successful with their mini goals. For example, when working with Student A, I said, 'you were breathing at the end of each line whether or not there was a period. Next time I want you to track the words with your finger, and when you get to a period then take a breath.'"

Criteria III: Impact on students (*How student performance/learning improved as a result of changes in practice*)

- "Students were starting to incorporate rubric vocabulary in our discussions. For example, when discussing qualities of fluent readers, Student C said, 'only take breaths on periods and don't get stuck on words'."
- "Next, Student A and B peer evaluated each other using the reading fluency rubrics. They were able to accurately score and provide each other with one statement of positive feedback and one statement of corrective feedback. For example, Student A told Student B, "I thought you did a good job with pace, but you could work on reading smoothly.'"
- "As a result of the corrective feedback, Student A used the strategy of tracking with her finger during the next lesson and was successful in only taking breaths at the periods."

Indicator: 7. Teachers implement instruction in order to engage students in rigorous and relevant learning and to promote their curiosity about the world at large by: Providing meaningful, appropriate and specific feedback to students during instruction to improve their performance.

Goal:
I will research and provide quality instructional feedback to students during learning activities. As a result, students will take more ownership of work, monitor learning, and set their own performance goals.

Initial Summary:
After reviewing the CCT Performance Profile with my mentor, I identified "providing quality feedback" as an area of weakness in my instruction. I provided motivational feedback such as "good job" rather than corrective feedback. I feared corrective feedback would discourage the students and hinder their work production. For some students motivational feedback improved on task behavior but had little impact on learning. Most students were unable to monitor learning or assess their performance and had little awareness feedback was being given. I left minimal time for feedback/review because I didn't view feedback as a valuable instructional tool.

Reflection Paper:
My mentor and I examined the CCT and discussed my current use of feedback. I shared my fears regarding the impact of corrective feedback on my students. We discussed different ways of providing feedback such as: rubrics, verbal feedback, corrective feedback, visual tools to mark progress, and peer/self-evaluation and how the feedback would positively affect student performance. Through our discussion, I realized I needed professional development to learn how to provide corrective feedback. As a result of my use of feedback in instruction students will take more ownership of work, monitor learning, and set their own performance goals.

After the discussion with my mentor the first change I made was to adjust my current use of feedback. I stopped only using the phrase "good job" and started providing verbal feedback to my students in which I commented on how they did something appropriate/correct. My comments included statements such as "Nice work getting your mouth ready to read" and "I like how you just self-corrected the word apple." Some of my students said "thank you" while others did not acknowledge the feedback. At that point I knew I still had more work to do to refine my use of corrective feedback.

In addition to providing specific verbal feedback I wanted to include a visual tool. I started using a reading fluency rubric with students A and B. The rubric assessed students in the categories of volume, smoothness, pace, expression, and preparedness. The highest scores in each category were described as: volume: "student is loud enough for all the audience to hear and maintains

volume throughout the whole passage"; smoothness: "the student reads continuously without any stops, reading is not choppy"; pace: "the speed is the same throughout the reading, it is not too slow or fast"; expression: "the student raises voice at specific punctuations and interests the audience in the reading"; preparedness: "the student is comfortable with the passage and has clearly rehearsed". When I introduced the rubric I explained that we would use the rubric to score the students' reading and it would assist in showing their progress. I discussed the language on the rubric and modeled what the language meant. We scored the students' performances after they read using the rubric. I noticed students were willing to score themselves but their scores varied from those I provided. From the scores on the rubric I provided feedback to them about their strengths such as "you did a good job remembering to keep reading despite getting stuck on the word charge." Due to only using positive feedback and not corrective, pertaining to the rubric the students did not become upset. Using the rubric did not detract from my instructional time. The students began requesting to use the rubric each session because they stated "it is fun."

I acquired articles from the Special Education Resource Center (SERC) Library. I read *The Power of Feedback* (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Hattie and Timperley suggest that all feedback should address three questions (How am I going? Where am I going? and Where to next?). I decided these questions could help steer the content of my feedback. The authors also state special education teachers often fail to include feedback into their instruction due to time constraints. Hattie and Timperley, state that feedback should be immediate and could be as simple as two sentences during instruction. This suggestion made me consider that feedback wouldn't detract from the small amount of instructional time I have with each student.

From *Classroom Best Practices: Providing Feedback to Students in the Classroom*, I learned about different ways of providing feedback and involving students in the process. I gained that feedback should be corrective and provide students with something to fix. To foster involvement students should self and peer evaluate work and provide feedback to one another. My inclusion of students in the process would contribute to my goal of having students monitor and take ownership of their learning.

After reading the articles I implemented some of the suggestions and strategies. I wrote down on an index card Hattie and Timperley's three questions to address. When providing feedback to students I tried to always address one of the three questions. I also made it a point to provide immediate feedback. One session that exemplified these changes occurred with Student C. While reading, Student C kept interchanging the words boy, big, box, and boat. I shared my notes with him and stated that all the words he had gotten wrong started with the letter "B". I told him that when he came to a word that began with the letter "B", he needed to stop and look at all the letters in the word. This feedback was corrective and timely and addressed Hattie & Timperley's questions of "where am I" and "where am I going". In the next lesson I noticed the impact of my feedback when he read the words correctly.

To further improve my use of feedback I arranged to observe two colleagues and their use of feedback. I observed a third grade teacher conferencing in small groups with students using a rubric. She had previously shared the rubric with students and had discussed the desired score and

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criteria to meet that score. During my observation the teacher reviewed the scores on the students' written summaries and stated what they could do next time to achieve a higher score. She then asked the student to summarize what they would do. The teacher's use of the rubric appeared to be more effective than how I was using the reading fluency rubric. I realized then that I needed to review the reading fluency rubric and state the desired score to students prior to reading. While observing the small group conference I noticed that when students were asked to summarize the teacher's feedback their comments were reflective of their performance and focused on a goal. I decided I would try this summarizing technique to actively engage my students. None of the students I observed became upset with the feedback the teacher provided.

I also observed a supplemental skills teacher doing a one-on-one math lesson. The student she was working with was reluctant to use the provided manipulatives. The teacher provided him feedback and reminded him of his previous success when using the manipulatives. This student who found the work challenging did not become upset when provided with feedback. The feedback had a positive effect on the student and he used the manipulatives to successfully complete the math problem.

I implemented these strategies into my instruction. For students A and B, I started the sessions by reviewing the rubrics from their previous sessions and stating what they were going to do during the current lesson to try and achieve the desired score. I asked them to summarize what they needed to do. After they read, we evaluated their current performance using the rubric and I provided feedback on how they read such as "I liked how when you became stuck on a word you used your word strategies and didn't become upset that you were stuck". Students A and B began recalling the strategy they needed to apply to be successful from one session to the next. For example, when I asked student B what she needed to do to improve her score in smoothness she stated "stop only on periods and read continuously." For Students C and D I began each session by telling them their goal. For example I introduced the lesson by saying "Today you are going to use your finger to read the word."

Even with Hattie & Timperley's three questions guiding my feedback I still didn't always provide the correct feedback. While reading with Student D he made miscues because he was only looking at the first letter. I instructed him to "look at all the letters in the word you are reading before saying the word." I asked him to repeat what he was going to do and he stated "Look at all the letters, do you know what is for lunch today?" The student's errors and my feedback continued for a few sessions. I became frustrated that my feedback was not effective. I expressed my frustration to my mentor and we discussed the situation. Through our discussion I determined the ineffectiveness of my feedback was due to the topic my feedback was addressing. I needed to provide feedback to the student in regards to his on-task behavior while reading, not his decoding. To assist in my feedback of his on-task behavior I developed a visual reminder of what I expected his on-task behavior to look like. The visual had icons depicting appropriate posture, looking at work, listening, and no talking. I showed the student the visual tool before each lesson and reviewed that he needed to do the whole lesson without telling me non-relevant information. After a successful lesson the student expressed his success and said, "I got all the words right". I prompted him

further about why he got all the words correct and he said "well I didn't try to tell you anything."

The changes I was making in my provision of feedback was producing some student progress. I was providing students with honest feedback which was corrective and specific. Students were not shutting down due to feedback and were applying the feedback when reminded of it each session. Students were starting to incorporate rubric vocabulary in our discussions. For example, when discussing qualities of fluent readers, Student C said, "only take breaths on periods and don't get stuck on words." Despite this progress students were still not taking ownership of their work, monitoring learning, and setting their own performance goals. During this time I also attended a district meeting for all TEAM participants in which our progress was discussed. Everyone else seemed to have made more progress. I became discouraged and contemplated changing my goal. I discussed this with my mentor and she assured me my students were making progress and suggested I try some additional strategies or gather more information.

I hunted for more information about feedback with special education students. I found How to Give Effective Feedback to your Students (Brookhart, 2008). Brookhart suggests when providing feedback to students with special needs the feedback should address only one area/item to fix at a time. The additional feedback should only be about that area/item until the student understands/corrects it. She explained, by addressing only one area at a time students are less likely to become overwhelmed with their shortcomings. Contained in Brookhart's book was a feedback data sheet for reading which she had acquired from a colleague. The sheet required a "mini" goal to be set for the student and a tally mark to be recorded every time the student achieved the mini goal correctly. The sheet provided visual feedback to the students about their success and steered the feedback provided by the teacher.

I took Brookhart's idea of "mini" goals and the data sheet and implemented them into my lessons. When I first implemented the data sheet and mini-goals, I let Students A, B, C, and D do the first task of the session and took notes. From their errors I created mini goals for them and explained the mini goal and the data sheet. I told them that it was their responsibility to work on achieving the mini goal each session and that we would record their success with a tally mark. When they successfully performed/accomplished their mini goal 10 times we marked that mini goal as mastered and determined a new mini goal. The data sheet steered my feedback. I was able to provide positive feedback about their success with their mini goal and corrective feedback in regards to strategies to try to be more successful with their mini goals. For example, when working with Student A, I said, "you were breathing at the end of each line whether or not there was a period. Next time I want you to track the words with your finger, and when you get to a period then take a breath." As a result of corrective feedback, Student A used the strategy of tracking with her finger during the next lesson and was successful in only taking breaths at the periods.

The pairing of visual feedback (provided by the data sheet and reading fluency rubric) with verbal feedback had the greatest impact on my students. Student A verbalizes the criteria on the reading fluency rubric and will state to me which strategy she is going to use while reading. For example she will say "I am going to use my finger so I don't lose my place and not read smoothly." She also previews a new story then considers its length and difficulty in order to set her own words per

minute goal. The goals she sets are appropriate and close to the ones I would set which exemplifies her ability to self-monitor. Student B can verbalize the rubric criteria and monitor her work to self-evaluate her performance. During the first occasion in which she met the criteria for the highest score in the smoothness category she said to me "I think I get the highest score but I'm not sure." I asked her why she thought she got the highest score and she verbalized "because I stopped for breaths only at periods and commas, I didn't stop on hard words, and my reading wasn't choppy."

She was correct and was able to verbalize her reasoning for her success using vocabulary from the rubric. I was impressed how she was able to provide herself with specific and accurate feedback. I did a joint lesson with Students A and B, which my mentor observed. I had them each take a turn reading a story out loud. Next, Student A and B peer evaluated each other using the reading fluency rubrics. They were able to accurately score and provide each other with one statement of positive feedback and one statement of corrective feedback. For example Student A told Student B "I thought you did a good job with pace, but you could work on reading smoothly." Students A and B's ability to peer evaluate and provide feedback to each other further highlights the impact my feedback has had on them.

Student C has commented to me about his mini goals, his success, and his feeling towards reading which all illustrate the success of my use of visual and verbal feedback. While working on his mini goal of reading the "S" at the end of words, he kept emphasizing the "S" sound. I asked him why he was doing that and he said "because I want to make sure you hear it so I can master my goal." At first I recorded his tallies when he achieved his mini goal but after a few sessions he requested to make his own tallies. When I asked him why he stated, "it's my hard work." After mastering his mini goal of reading the –s at the end of the words, he kept reversing the words on and in. Before I could suggest making those words his current mini goal, Student C said to me "I think on and in should be my new mini goal." I asked why and he stated "because if I work on them then I make my reading better." This marked a change in Student C's performance by setting his own goal and exemplifies his ability to take ownership of work, monitor learning, and set his own performance goals. Most recently after mastering 5 mini goals Student C said to me "I feel like I can really read stuff. I like reading now."

Once I shifted my focus the behavioral feedback I provided to Student D had a positive impact on his on-task behavior. He is setting his own performance goal each day on how many pages he is going to read without getting off task. He can verbalize to me the criteria for remaining on task. He can also self-monitor his performance and verbalize to me after reading whether or not he gets to put a tally mark on his goal sheet.

My students and I have learned a great deal about the power of quality feedback. In the beginning of this process I used ineffective performance based feedback. My comments were too general and occasionally inaccurate. Now as part of my daily practice, I make time for feedback and provide feedback that is work or performance based, specific, accurate, and challenges students to think about their work/performance. My students' attitudes and responses as a result of feedback changed from not remaining on task, not enjoying the work they did, and being discouraged when they were wrong to taking ownership of their work, monitoring their learning, and setting their own performance goals.

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