

Answers to *The Power of Praise: Empowering Students Through Positive Feedback*

1. What is the purpose of marking? Why should we mark our students' work anyway?

Marking provides students with acknowledgement for the work they have done. Without marking, students can feel that their efforts are worthless – that their hard work is not appreciated.

Marking also allows teachers to provide feedback – pointing out 'mistakes' and the methods to correct them. When this is done in a caring, non-confrontational way, it really can help students to enjoy the process of constant personal improvement.

Marking also allows the teacher to become intimate with the skills, attributes, abilities and needs of a particular class of students. By checking classwork and homework regularly, teachers can find out information about:

- Key problems that seem to recur (e.g. calculation difficulties)
- Presentation skills and artistic ability
- Misconceptions picked up along the way (by individuals and by whole classes)
- Skills issues (e.g. not labeling diagrams correctly, failure to use a ruler when drawing tables, etc.)
- Effort and determination

On a final note; we must not forget that marking should also aim to encourage and motivate students. A few genuine and specific words of praise can have a massive impact on a child's sense of self-confidence.

2. What is a S.W.A.P. template?

Every report should contain these four elements (at the very least):

- **S**trengths
- **W**eaknesses (including targets)
- **A**ttainment
- **P**rogress

They don't necessarily have to be in that order, but they should all be present somewhere.

Creating a S.W.A.P. template is really easy, and the example I gave in the book is repeated here:

x has had a **disappointing/steady/good/very good** term/half-term/year/semester. He/She has shown strengths in a number of areas including..... . This is pleasing, but even further progress could be made by..... x's most recent assessment score was, which indicates to me that..... Progress has been **disappointing/steady/good/very good**, as exemplified by the fact that.....

Feel free to copy and paste this as you see fit. You may also wish to create a S.W.A.P. template that more accurately matches the students that you teach.

Answers to *The Power of Praise: Empowering Students Through Positive Feedback*

3. What is the difference between ‘absorptive’ and ‘diffusive’ live-marking?

Diffusive Live-Marking is when the teacher holds a marking pen in hand and walks around the classroom (as the kids are doing a task) and marks the work in ‘real-time’. It is as though the teacher is ‘diffusing through the students.

Of course – reinforce your written comments with verbal feedback (and you can even write ‘verbal feedback give’ or ‘VF’ on the work).

Hey presto – you just saved yourself an hour or so of after-school marking time!

Absorptive Live-Marking is when the teacher acts like a ‘sponge’ that ‘absorbs’ the students: instead of walking around the classroom to mark work in ‘real-time’, you sit at your desk (or at a designated ‘consultation point’ in the room) and call the students to your desk one-at-a-time to discuss their work, and mark it in front of them.

Additional note: to save you even more time, and to ensure that students really do understand the feedback they’ve been given, why not ask the students to write down what you have said on their work? *“Mr Rogers said that I should label my diagrams because this is a commonly examined skill on Paper 2”*

In Appendix 1 at the end of this document you’ll see some real examples that I have generated with my students, showing what this would look like (and notice that the students have actually done what I asked them to do):

4. What is ‘Subtle Reinforcement’?

Subtle reinforcement is a method of reminding students of who they are (i.e. their character traits) and what they have done (i.e. their achievements) at key points within an academic year or even over the course of their schooling. It involves using Professional Intelligence, remembering key moments in a child’s schooling and looking for key moments to remind the students of what they are capable of.

5. What is ‘Professional Intelligence’, and how can it be used to empower our students?

Knowing your students on a deep level is a fundamental principle of rapport building. You need to know ALL of your students’ dreams and aspirations, strengths and weaknesses and other relevant information (such as issues at home or Special Educational Needs).

This kind of knowledge or ‘intelligence’ can even be used to inform your lesson planning. See the examples I included at Angela Watson’s great Cornerstone for Teachers site [here](#).

Answers to *The Power of Praise: Empowering Students Through Positive Feedback*

Unfortunately, however, few teachers truly utilize the power of professional intelligence gathering.

The best way I've found to gather such knowledge is by getting a fresh notebook and setting a page aside for each student you teach (or keeping some kind of online journal). On each page write down important (but not confidential) information about each student – e.g. the ECA's they do, their career goals, subject-area strengths, competitions they're entering or have won, etc.

The information you gather can be used to:

- Inform lesson planning so that content is made more relevant to individual students, and the group, than it normally would be
- Trigger conversations in leisurely school settings such as at the lunch queue, when you're on duty or when you're supporting students in a mentoring or pastoral role
- Provide fuel for you to reinforce the credibility and brilliance of the students' personal goals, so that a 'hypnotic rhythm' of focus empowers each student to fulfill their goals
- Show the students that you truly care about their education and their future

6. Complete the sentence: *Praise must be _____ in order to be effective.*

Praise must be collective in order to be effective

7. Describe how you could use a Learning Journals system in your practice

This will depend very much on the context in which you teach, and the kind of students you have, However, I've found that learning journals can work really well with students at every stage of high-schooling.

Check out this blog post [here](#) for some more info about learning journals.

8. List the Four Rules of Praise

Rule #1: Praise must be sincere

Rule #2: Praise must be specific

Rule #3: Praise must be recorded and remembered by the teacher

Rule #4: Reinforce the praise at significant points in the future

Answers to *The Power of Praise: Empowering Students Through Positive Feedback*

9. Where possible, what five elements should written comments on student work contain?

- **Specificity:** e.g. *'Well done for..... correctly identifying the conjugate acid-base pairs'*
- **Positivity:** phrases such as *'Well done for...'*, *'Brilliant!'* and *'Excellent!'* can be seen
- **Skills acknowledgement:** on the first piece of work the student is praised for *'writing down all of the information'*
- **Extension:** Questions are written on the second piece of work (e.g. *'What is the role of boric acid in this equation?'*). The student would be expected to write answers on the work in order to update and enhance it. The teacher would, of course, have to follow this up shortly afterwards (perhaps in a week or two-weeks' time).
- **Ticks:** Ticks provide a quick show of positive acknowledgement and should be considered a marking 'staple' and the bare-minimum one would expect on a marked piece of work

10. Outline some of the challenges associated with using verbal feedback effectively

Verbal feedback needs to be:

- Internalized and understood by the students receiving it
- Acted upon

Ensuring that this actually happens is the greatest challenge of verbal feedback. Whilst time is saved in the initial stages of feedback (you don't have to physically write comments on work, for example), you will have to re-read student work and collect it back in at a later stage in order to make sure that the verbal feedback was actually acted upon. Teachers need to be:

- Organized and....
- Vigilant

.... to ensure that follow-up happens.

Answers to *The Power of Praise: Empowering Students Through Positive Feedback*

Appendix 1: Examples of Live Marking in Which Students Have Articulated the Feedback on the Work

A stone dropped off the top of a cliff falls down by 20m in 2s. Calculate its average velocity (a) downwards and (b) horizontally,

a) 20 divide by 2 → 10m/s downwards. ✓
 b) 0 divide by 2 → 0m/s horizontally. ✓

Deceleration/Retardation

acceleration = $\frac{\text{final velocity} - \text{initial velocity}}{\text{time taken}}$ ✓ $a = \frac{v-u}{t}$

- Change in velocity = final velocity - initial velocity. $v-u$ ✓
- Deceleration - This is where the speed is decreasing with time.
- Circular Motion at a constant speed - Acceleration is occurring because the direction of motion is continually changing and hence so is its velocity.

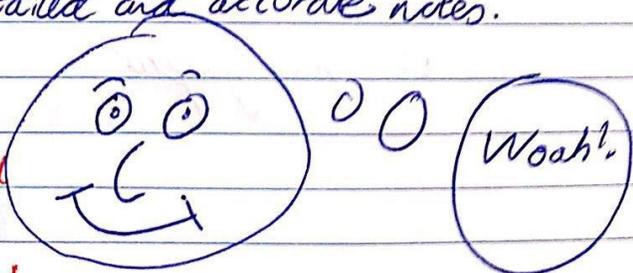
time (s)	0	1	2	3	4
Velocity (m/s)	0	8	16	24	32

Calculate the acceleration of a car that changes in velocity 5m/s to 25m/s in 4seconds.

$25\text{m/s} - 5\text{m/s} = 20\text{m/s}$ $20 \div 4 = 5\text{m/s}^2$ ✓

Very detailed and accurate notes.

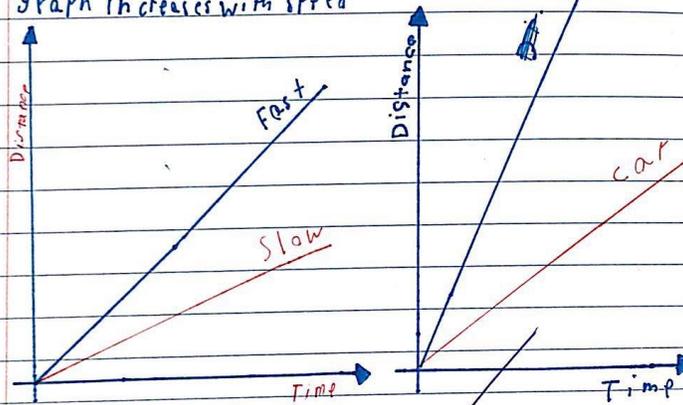
Mr Rogers said very detailed and accurate notes, highlights formulas and very nice graph



Answers to *The Power of Praise: Empowering Students Through Positive Feedback*

Distance	Time	Average speed
60m	3s	20 m/s
1400m	35s	40 m/s
300m	0.20s	1500 m/s
80 km	2h	40 km/h
150×10^6 km	8 Min 20s	3.0×10^8 m/s
1 km	3s	330 m/s

The slope or gradient of a distance-time graph increases with speed



Hint: Underline question and write time and distance - Mr Roger