How do we give effective feedback?

Teacher feedback on student work can be a powerful tool to dramatically improve student learning BUT the **quality** must be good or it can actually have negative effects on student growth. In her book, <u>How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students</u>, Susan Brookhart says, "Feedback matches specific descriptions and suggestions with a particular student's work. It is just-in-time, just-for-me information delivered when and where it can do the most good (p. 1)."

Tips for effective feedback:
1. Articulate clear, appropriately challenging learning goals
2. Make the criteria for achieving those goals clear to students, usually with a rubric
3. Focus on the work and the process of completing the work in relation to the goals
4. Think about it from the students' perspective, what would you want to hear?
5. Help the student figure out what to do next, but don't give them the answer or make all the corrections for them
6. Try to be descriptive and not evaluative
7. Be positive and specific
8. Be timely and frequent

A couple examples:

Sample feedback	Thoughts on the feedback
"Conceptual understanding shows the relationship between two or more concepts. Your explanation and example support your statement about one concept. What other concept can you think of that best relates to your example?"	*This feedback is focused on the goal of conceptual understanding and gives specific instructions on what is missing. It is also descriptive and not evaluative. It tries to be forward thinking and solution-oriented with the question without giving the answer.*
"You used a lot of examples to support your statement of conceptual relationship. That makes it a really compelling statement. How did you think of examples we had not talked about in class?"	*This feedback is positive and descriptive. It is likely from a student who may have been previously struggling with coming up with examples outside of class. The question allows the student to reflect on how he or she achieved this to help him or her continue on this path toward success.*
This statement is complex and precise. The examples clearly support the relationship between the concepts in the statement. Nice work. How might you increase the sophistication of the conceptual relationship to take it to the next level?	*This is descriptive, positive feedback for a student who is well on track for the learning target. The question gives this student something to work on for improvement, promoting a culture of continuous growth.*