# Feedback

## Prep–Year 10

Feedback provides meaningful information about students' strengths and areas for improvement to support them to progress their learning. Hattie and Clarke (2019) suggest that feedback is a critical and powerful element of teachers' work that informs future teaching, learning and assessment. Cyclical and ongoing feedback opportunities also support students to give and receive regular feedback on progress towards learning goals, and identify the next steps in their learning.

Understanding how teachers and students use qualitative and quantitative assessment information is vital to understanding and improving learning. Effective feedback encourages self-reflection, allows students to actively monitor and evaluate their own learning, and facilitates self-direction and motivation. Assessment and feedback used together support continuous, collaborative, active and self-directed learning.

## Characteristics of effective feedback

To support evaluation, self-reflection and improved understanding, feedback should be:

- ongoing

- individualised

- specific to the teaching, learning and assessment

- clear, and use language that is readily interpreted by the intended audience, i.e. age-appropriate for the student

- timely, so that students can act on it and adjust their learning

- collaborative, so that student, teachers and parents/carers all support and participate in the student's learning

- delivered in a way that supports the student to reflect, act on the feedback and build their capacity for self-assessment.

## Creating meaningful feedback opportunities

Feedback is information about the student's progress and performance relative to learning goals and should be based on ongoing evidence of learning. The process of gathering and interpreting evidence should be embedded within teaching and learning processes to create feedback loops.

Effective feedback must answer three questions:

- Where am I going? — Clarify, share and develop understand of the learning goals.

- How am I going? — Relate evidence of student learning to the learning goals and success criteria.

- Where to next? — Provide information or next steps to support the student to progress their learning.

*For all Queensland schools*

Learning goals represent the procedural and cognitive skills that are expected from students. When established before learning commences, they tell students what they will be required to learn. Evidence is collected to determine what the student has learnt in relation to the learning goals. Feedback is provided in the form of alternative steps aimed at progressing students' learning.

# Considerations for teaching and learning

Feedback should be embedded as part of the ongoing teaching, learning and assessment process. Underpinning effective feedback is a school and classroom culture of assessment and learning where students understand the value of mistakes as learning opportunities and feel safe enough to make these mistakes. Struggle is a natural part of learning, and students should understand that improvement happens through perseverance, effort and by acting on the feedback they receive.

## Feedback to the teacher

Feedback to the teacher can involve checking for understanding (formative feedback) or collecting and analysing ongoing assessment evidence. Teachers use assessment evidence to adjust instruction and move the learning forward (Wiliam & Leahy 2015).

## Feedback to the student

Students receive feedback from teachers, peers or via self-reflection. This feedback can be of four types:

- about the self — 'You always put in a lot of effort.'

- about the task — 'You need to aim when you throw the ball to hit a target.'

- about the process — 'Use our class vocabulary list to make sure you include appropriate mathematical language to describe the 3D shapes.'

- that encourages self-regulation — 'You referred to the example I modelled in class yesterday, and I can see that helped you to include all the steps for your science experiment.'

Feedback that supports the student to develop a positive self-image as a learner is important in establishing positive teacher–student relationships. To develop a relationship built on trust, teachers should highlight perseverance and other qualities of the student as a learner.

As students develop their understanding or skills, feedback messages should progress from being about the task itself to being about the processes required to deepen understanding or skills, and then to cues that prompt the student to develop self-regulation of the feedback process. Feedback about the processes required to complete the task is more effective than feedback about the outcome or task.

## Strategies to enhance the application of feedback

Hattie and Clarke (2019) state that developing students' capacity to receive and interpret feedback is more important than the quantity of feedback provided. Feedback opportunities should include time for students to both receive and respond to feedback from their teachers and peers to deepen their knowledge and understanding and/or progress their skills.

Teachers should:

- establish a classroom culture that is conducive to giving and receiving feedback

- plan teaching and learning that includes regular and timely feedback loops. This supports students to remain engaged and motivated by acknowledging progress made and providing the next steps to progress toward achieving the identified learning goals

- choose appropriate teaching and learning strategies that support students to enact feedback provided

- explicitly model strategies for giving and receiving feedback about student's own and others' learning prior to students applying these strategies

- provide feedback as close as practical to when evidence of student learning is gathered.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership provides advice, strategies and resources to support teachers and schools to implement feedback effectively: www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/improve-practice/feedback.

# References

Hattie, J & Clarke, S 2019, *Visible Learning: Feedback*, Routledge, Abingdon, UK.

Wiliam, D & Leahy, S 2015, *Embedding Formative Assessment: Practical techniques for K–12 classrooms*, Learning Sciences International, West Palm Beach, FL, USA.

# Further reading

Boaler, J 2016, 'Mistakes grow your brain', *Youcubed at Stanford University*, www.youcubed.org/evidence/mistakes-grow-brain.

Hattie, J & Timperley, H 2007, 'The power of feedback', *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 77, issue 1, pp. 81–112.

Hattie, J & Zierer, K 2017, *10 Mindframes for Visible Learning: Teaching for success*, Routledge, London, UK.