

Survey Question

23. I know how well I am doing in this class

Australian Professional Standard

Professional Practice Domain

Standard 5: Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Focus areas:

- 5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning
- 5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements
- 5.5 Report on student achievement

What does this sound like in the classroom?

"We're always getting feedback from this teacher about how we're doing. Each week we get some assessment; it means there are no surprises and we know whether we are on track."

Why is this important?

Feedback is a major influence on learning and achievement (Hattie, 2009). Testing data shows that students who are provided with feedback usually perform better than students who are not (NSW DEC, 2014).

Effective feedback must answer three major questions (Hattie & Timperley, 2007):

- Where am I going? (What are the goals)
- How am I going? (What progress is being made towards the goals)
- Where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make progress better)

Feedback aims to close the gap between a student's current performance and desired performance after instruction has occurred by identifying whether an answer is correct or incorrect, describing how understanding is correct or flawed and explaining what needs to be done to improve performance in future. Students can use feedback to increase effort and employ more effective strategies. Teachers can use feedback to set or clarify appropriate challenging and specific goals, and determine which strategies to use to assist students to reach the goals (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

The type of feedback and the way it is given is critical to how effective it is. While the frequency of feedback in most classrooms could be higher, simply providing more feedback is not a solution (Dinham, 2008). It is necessary to consider the nature of the feedback, the timing of the feedback and how a student will receive this feedback, as students can bias and select feedback information (Hattie, 2013).

Feedback with the most impact is about a task and how to do it more effectively, as opposed to feedback related to praise, rewards and

punishment (NSW DEC, 2014). The most effective forms of feedback provide cues or reinforcement to learners as related to the learning goals. Rewards like stickers and awards usually are less effective as they usually contain little information about the task. Encouraging students to self-reflect and actively seek feedback is also an effective strategy (Hattie, 2013).

The timing of the feedback - immediate or delayed - depends on the learning activity. Immediate feedback is more effective for error correction during task acquisition and learning processes. Delayed feedback is more effective during fluency building and learning more difficult concepts that take more thought processing (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

What strategies have been shown to work in the classroom?

Research has shone a light on the most effective strategies for providing feedback. These guidelines for using feedback have been shown to enhance learning (Shute, 2008):

- Focus feedback on the task not the learner
- Provide descriptive feedback (describe what, how, why)
- Present feedback in manageable chunks of information (do not overwhelm students)
- Be specific and clear
- Keep feedback as simple as possible but no simpler than it needs to be based on the learning goals
- Reduce uncertainty between performance and goals
- Give unbiased, objective feedback in written form
- Use a learning goal approach to feedback (focus on the learning rather than the performance)
- Provide feedback only after students have attempted a solution

What three things can I try in my classroom tomorrow?

1. Make a note of the feedback you do provide students.
How well does it match the guidelines above?
2. Ask students what type of feedback they would find most useful.
3. Check if students are responding to, or acting upon feedback given.

What opportunities are there for collaboration with my colleagues?

Ask expert teachers their opinion of what constitutes effective feedback and what works best for the students at your school. Share examples of feedback given to students. Liaise with fellow subject teachers to ascertain common failings among students in your subject area. Compare feedback approaches and discuss whether they have satisfied Hattie's 'three major questions'.

Where can I find out more?

Video

- Dylan Wiliam: Giving Effective Feedback
- Robert Reetz: Putting Students on a Winning Streak by teaching them to use constructive feedback

Referenced articles, books and other great reads:

- Archer, A. and Hughes, C. (2011) *Explicit Instruction*. Guildford Publications, USA. Chapter 7 (describes detailed steps for providing immediate affirmative and corrective feedback) and Chapter 8 (describes detailed steps for providing feedback on independent assignments)
- Dinham, S. (2007c). How schools get moving and keep improving: Leadership for teacher learning, student success and school renewal. *Australian Journal of Education*. 51(3): 263- 275.
- Hattie, J. (2013) *Visible Learning for Teachers*. Routledge Taylor & Francis. Chapter 7: The place of feedback (detailed steps and strategies for giving feedback)
- Hattie, J. & Timperley, H. (2007) The Power of Feedback. *Review of Educational Research*; Mar 2007; 77, 1; Academic Research Library pg. 81
- Hattie, J.C. (2009), *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. London & New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis.
- NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC), (2014) *What Works Best: Evidence-based practices to help improve NSW student performance*. Accessed 16 May 2015.
- Shute, V. J. (2008). 'Focus on formative feedback.' *Review of Educational Research*, 78.3, pp. 153-189.