Pivot
Transforming teaching practice

Survey Question	24. This teacher pushes me to correct my mistakes

Australian Professional Standard

Professional Practice Domain
Standard 5: Assess, provide feedback and reporting on student learning
Focus areas:
- 5.1 Assess student learning
- 5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning
- 3.1 Establish challenging learning goals

What does this sound like in the classroom?

"When this teacher gives our work back, we have to look through it carefully and think about where we went wrong. It's hard to do sometimes, but I can see how it helps me."

Why is this important?

It is commonly reported that students do not read teacher feedback comments (Duncan, 2007), however, feedback is a major influence on learning and achievement (Hattie, 2009). Encouraging students to self-reflect and actively seek feedback is an effective strategy (Hattie, 2013). Research has been conducted on the value of allowing students to grade tests themselves, as this offers four potential advantages over teacher grading:

- Logistical: With an entire classroom grading their own or peer assessments, they can be marked quickly and save teacher time. Quicker feedback to students follows (McLeod, 2001) and peers can spend more time offering more detailed feedback than the teacher (Weaver & Cotrell, 1986).

- Pedagogical: Observing peer answers is an opportunity for students to deepen understanding about a topic (Bloom & Krathwohl, 1956).

- Metacognitive: When assessing is part of a student's learning experience, they can develop a much greater mastery of subject matter (Brown, 1987). When students develop greater awareness of how assessments are created, then students can become more proficient in developing their own test items in preparation for final exams (Black & Harrison, 2001).

- Affective: By involving students in the learning process, they develop a greater sense of shared ownership for the learning process (McLeod, 2001).

Good feedback is focused so that students have an opportunity to act on the feedback. It is well developed, specific and provides clear direction (Chamberlain, Dison & Button, 1998).

Guidelines for using feedback to enhance learning include (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

Students need to understand the language of feedback, and this needs to be developmentally and subject appropriate. When matching comments to students' current understanding can be improved in several ways:
1. Make the criteria and standards expected of assessable work clear to students before they start;
2. Discuss, explain and demonstrate expected practical and thinking skills before students are assessed; provide exemplars to students
3. Write the comments as simply and clearly as possible
4. Provide a glossary of common terms and their meanings that you regularly use in comments on work
5. Follow the guidelines above on content of comments, i.e., describe the characteristics of the work that are being commented on, explain the judgements being made in relation to the criteria and standards, provide suggestions and explanations that show how to do things better.

One crucial point to come from some recent research (Burke, 2009) is that many students do not know how to use feedback as many have never been taught how to do so. A key element of classroom discussion with students should be the development of strategies to use feedback to improve their future performance and learning.

1. Check the feedback you have given to students previously. Does it answer the 'three major questions'? (See Hattie above)
2. Ask students for positive examples of feedback they have received. How did it help them to reflect upon the task and their work? Did it encourage them to make improvements?
3. It can also be effective to advertise the success of each student in the group when possible. Public, positive reinforcement speeds up acquisition of skills and informs others of the array of strategies available to them.

| **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
- Teaching Channel: Carol Dweck on Performance Assessment
- Dylan Wiliam: Giving Effective Feedback
- Robert Reetz: Putting Students on a Winning Streak by teaching them to use constructive feedback
- Ron Berger: Austin's butterfly |

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)
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- Brown, A. (1987). Metacognition, executive control, self-regulation, and other more mysterious mechanisms. In F. E. Weinhart & R. H. Kluwe (Eds.), Metacognition, motivation, and understanding (pp. 65–116). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc
- Chamberlain, C., Dison, L., Button, A. (1998) Lecturer feedback - implications for developing writing skills: A South African perspective. Proceedings of the HERDSA Annual International Conference. New Zealand.
- Curtin University, Western Australia. (2015) Providing Feedback for Student Learning. Accessed May 2015
- Duncan, N. (2007). Feed-forward: improving students' use of tutor comments, Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education. 32 (3), 271 -283.
- Hattie, J. & Timperley, H. (2007) The Power of Feedback. Review of Educational Research; Mar 2007; 77, 1; Academic Research Library pg. 81
- Hattie, J. (2013) Visible Learning for Teachers. Routledge Taylor & Francis. Chapter 7: The place of feedback (detailed steps and strategies for giving feedback)
- Flinders University (2015). Research summaries: Feedback to improve student learning. Accessed 6 May 2015.
- McLeod, A. (2001). In lieu of tests. National Teaching and Learning Forum's Frequently Asked Questions. Accessed August 4, 2015
- Stenger, Marianne. (2014) 5 Research-Based Tips for providing Effective Feedback. Accessed 7 May 2015.
- Spiller, D. (2009) Assessment: Feedback to Promote Student Learning University of Waikato. Accessed 9 May 2015.
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