

Survey Question

20. I feel comfortable asking this teacher for individual help about the things we are learning

Australian Professional Standard

Professional Practice Domain

Standard 4: Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Focus areas:

- 1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific needs of students across the full range of abilities
- 4.1 Support student participation
- 4.4 Maintain student safety
- 5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning

What does this sound like in the classroom?

"I feel that I can go and speak to this teacher after class if I don't understand, and they're always willing to help me. They always answer my questions that I send on email really quickly, too."

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). The climate of the classroom is critical for feedback to be effective. The climate needs to make students feel comfortable to make errors and seek feedback. Errors and feedback should be seen as leading to future learning (Hattie, 2012; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

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. Encouraging students to self-reflect and actively seek feedback is also an effective strategy (Hattie, 2012). Rewards like stickers and awards usually are less effective as they usually contain little information about the task.

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, 2012).

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 can relate to four levels (Hattie & Timperley, 2007):

- Task level: how well tasks are understood / performed
- Process level: the process or effort needed to understand or perform the tasks
- Self-regulation level: Self-monitoring, directing and regulating of actions
- Self level: Personal evaluations and effect about the learner (usually not effective)

What strategies have been shown to work in the classroom?

In the case of individualised feedback, it is important to note that building a strong relationship based on trust and respect will allow for greater opportunities for improvement. Consider providing praise (Archer & Hughes, 2011):

- That is contingent on behaviour that meets requirements
- That is specific praise rather than based on global reactions
- For noteworthy effort or success on difficult tasks
- That focuses on effort and achievements
- That uses students' own past performances for comparisons
- That is positive, credible and genuine
- That flows with the lesson

These principles strongly link with Professor Carol Dweck's work on 'Growth Mindset', where people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.

What three things can I try in my classroom tomorrow?

1. Speak to students individually and ask them about any concerns or difficulties they may be having with their work.
2. Be explicit with your class and explain that you are happy to accommodate any questions they have regarding their work in the future.
3. Designate a time for students to come to you for feedback/direction regarding their work.

What opportunities are there for collaboration with my colleagues?

Liaise with other teachers to compare the types and styles of feedback offered. Create a standardised method of offering individual meetings with students for feedback that is both efficient and effective.

Where can I find out more?

Video:

- Teaching Channel: Podcasting to personalise feedback
- Teaching Channel: Providing warm and cool feedback
- Carol Dweck: The effect of praise on mindsets

Referenced articles, books and other great reads:

- Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (2003). '"In praise of educational research": formative assessment'. *British Educational Research Journal*, 29.5, pp. 623-637.
- 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)
- 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)
- Hattie, J. & Timperley, H. (2007) The Power of Feedback. *Review of Educational Research*; Mar 2007; 77, 1; Academic Research Library pg. 81
- Shute, V. J. (2008). 'Focus on formative feedback.' *Review of Educational Research*, 78.3, pp. 153-189.