



Rewarding Learning

PROVIDING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Implications for Teaching & Learning



Providing Effective Feedback

Implications for Teaching and Learning

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Introduction

Feedback's potential to improve learning outcomes is routinely referenced in academic literature on education. Feedback is closely associated with the principles of assessment for learning, and the potential benefits of formative assessment that Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam identify in their pamphlet *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment* (1998). Yet there's a lack of clarity in education about precisely what is meant by 'feedback', and there's even less clarity about how to realise its benefits.

The default assumption is that if you supply the right sort of feedback to a learner, there's a greater possibility that the learner will succeed in improving their performance, because you'll have told them what they need to do to improve.

This resource material intends to highlight some important points from recent research on providing effective feedback in an educational context. The evidence consistently shows that, applied effectively, feedback can be the most powerful pedagogical tool; of any approach to teaching and learning, it has the potential to make the most difference to learners.¹

The gist of the research is that using feedback delivers benefits for learners when the teacher has carefully planned how and when to provide feedback, and the sort of feedback they should provide.

The difficulty is that there is no universally applicable recipe for successful feedback – no reproducible technique that can be reduced to a list of bullet points and applied in every circumstance. As Professor Rob Coe of the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring at Durham University emphasises:

there is a place for direct instruction, especially if people are learning something that is not in a familiar context for them. As the learner becomes more expert, there is more scope for investigation and learner-led approaches.

But what does that mean for me, teaching simultaneous equation to year 9 on a Friday afternoon? The answer is, it's hard to give general advice that is useful. It depends on the context – including students' levels of interest, knowledge and motivation.

Rather than consider feedback as general advice to be applied in every situation, it's more useful to think of it as a set of principles to reflect on, internalise and practise. When teachers and learners do this well, it helps learners grasp what you want them to learn. But it's no panacea: you can provide the best, most carefully planned, individually appropriate feedback possible and it will make no difference to the learner unless they then act on the feedback and change something in their performance.

For teachers, feedback involves not only giving feedback, but also receiving feedback and acting on it. They need to do both to ensure that learners gain the benefits of feedback.

The starting point for using feedback successfully is understanding that feedback isn't a single thing: it's all the ways in which details about an individual performance can be communicated to the performer – including aspects that they may not be aware of themselves.

But there's a corollary to giving feedback: the recipient needs to be motivated to act on the feedback. Done inappropriately, feedback could actually be demotivating, and so, detrimental to progress.

Consequently, it's worth remembering these two basic principles:

- feedback is a specific instance of communication; and
- it's about how you talk to people.

¹<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback/>

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Reception of Feedback

There are many ways in which we receive feedback:

- In the context of education, an easily recognised instance is marking: you got 8 out of 10 right, or you got a B+.
- In sport, feedback is often in the form of results: you came second, or your team won. The result gives you feedback on your performance: success, degree of success, failure, defeat...
- In music, drama and the performing arts, feedback can be audience reception, such as rapturous applause, booing or audience members leaving before the end of the performance.
- In our personal lives, feedback can be your observation of different ways your friends communicate with you, for example phoning you to arrange a night out, or else leaving you to hear about the arrangement from others. It can also be body language, such as a look of sadness from your partner when you're saying goodbye before a long absence.

Responses to our actions come in many forms, depending on the circumstances, and we react to those responses on an emotional level. That's one of the main reasons why feedback is potentially such a powerful tool – it taps into emotional reaction as well as intellectual understanding. This is also why – if you're getting negative feedback – you can be completely turned off something because it hurt you or made you feel bad about yourself.

That's also why it's so crucial to remember that feedback is fundamentally about how you talk to people. And if the messages are given in the right way at the right time, there's a better chance that they will be received and understood.

Sometimes there are occasions when no feedback is the most effective response, for example when a learner hands in a piece of work that they obviously did on the bus on the way to school, taking no time or care over it, and it's blatantly unacceptable.

A fair response might be to say: 'I'm not marking that; it isn't worth my time. I'll mark your work when you give me work worth marking'. Or, if an athlete produces a lacklustre sprint or an uncommitted throw, their coach might criticise them strongly, making the point that success in competition is hard won, and occasional lapses can't be tolerated if the goal is victory.

In both these examples, the feedback is customised to the circumstances, and knowing how and when to customise feedback is an art that develops through a lot of practice. You need to know the person to whom you're giving feedback in order to judge what message they need to hear and how you should structure it so that they understand and respond to it. There's no substitute for this: successful feedback depends on insight into the human relationship in question. And, as in any relationship, things can go wrong; words can be said that can't be taken back; tacit messages, body language, expression and tone of voice can betray what is left unsaid. That's why feedback is so difficult, and why there isn't and can't be a formula for it.

Instead, the teacher must be alert to ways of helping learners to progress. What do they need in order to make improvements, and how can you encourage them to make those changes? So, it's about your temperament and way of interacting as much as it's about the content of the feedback.

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The Power of Feedback

In his groundbreaking analysis of educational research *Visible Learning* (2008), Professor John Hattie draws attention to the high effect size associated with evidence from research studies on feedback. From this evidence, it's clear that using feedback effectively is potentially one of the most powerful pedagogical interventions available to teachers.²

Since the publication of *Visible Learning* and its influential precursor *Inside the Black Box*, feedback has become an important concept for educationalists. In the UK, for example, feedback is one of only two interventions cited by the Educational Endowment Foundation (EEF) in its Toolkit as being capable of producing eight months of additional progress when implemented successfully.

However, as the EEF states, and as Hattie himself is careful to point out, to make feedback work – in ways that the research suggests it can – you need to clarify what exactly is meant by 'feedback', and what's involved in implementing feedback techniques.

Responsive Teaching: The Teacher as the First Recipient of Feedback

A lot of the emphasis on feedback came from Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam's research into successful strategies for improving learning. Black and Wiliam point out that, if you want to help a learner to improve, to learn more and learn better, you first need to find out how they're doing at the moment. Methods of doing this range from informal observation to formal testing.

Black and Wiliam formalised this feedback cycle as 'assessment for learning'. This process is quite similar to assessing the quality of a meal or the impact of seeing a play: it involves weighing up several factors and arriving at a judgement.

The decision is not about measurement; instead, it involves using experience to gauge what's going on.

Wiliam has since used the phrase 'formative assessment', and more recently, 'responsive teaching', to refer to assessment for learning. 'Responsive teaching' is a useful expression in the context of feedback. There are two directions of feedback in the educational exchange between teacher and learner. Firstly, there's the feedback on the learner's performance that the teacher needs to obtain to find out how well they're doing and how to help them achieve the intended learning outcome. Then there's the feedback that the teacher provides to the learner to enable them to see where they have made mistakes, have misunderstood, or need something extra to achieve the desired level of success.

As in the case of engineering, there's a feedback loop. Think of a thermostat: a device that monitors temperature and switches a boiler on or off to adjust the temperature in response. What's being monitored in education is more difficult to measure: you can't take the temperature of someone's developing understanding of an abstract concept. Instead, you need some proxy for 'understanding' that indicates the sort of progress the learner is making. Frequently, the information available comes from several sources, including observing work in progress. Then, as with the thermostat, there has to be some adjustment in response, focusing on the desired direction. In other words, something has to be done in response to the feedback, or it isn't working as feedback.

²<http://visible-learning.org>

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Comment Only Marking

Several key points emerge from Black and Wiliam's work on assessment for learning or formative assessment. One that attracted a lot of attention was the observation that putting marks or grades on work has the effect of short-circuiting the feedback loop: the mark or grade becomes the only thing the recipient pays attention to. Whereas, if the work is returned with a comment that provides feedback, then there's more chance of the feedback leading to some change in performance as a result.

The corollary of this is that if the work has comments and a grade, the learner ignores the comment. This led to a trend called comment only marking, which became something of an orthodoxy for a while. It's important, however, to recognise that comment only marking is not the way to implement feedback successfully; giving effective feedback includes other factors.

Delaying Feedback

Hattie goes on to make a further point: that providing feedback to learners is only useful after the learners have acquired and developed the learning targeted; there's no point in providing premature feedback. While learners are still in the position of novices, it's more useful to focus on instruction.

Although the teacher corrects mistakes at this early stage, this is not formalised feedback, but rather a way of keeping learners on track. Feedback is not moment-by-moment advice; it's better understood as a mechanism to make reflection productive.

Implementing Feedback to Improve Outcomes

Before you decide that it's worth investing time and effort in scrutinising feedback in your institution, using edublogger Greg Ashman's 'Five questions to ask an education guru' can help you to shape your emphasis on using feedback.

Ashman suggests that, before taking the advice of any advocate for a particular technique or intervention, we scrutinise the claims being made:

1. What are you actually suggesting that we should do?
2. What problems do your proposals solve?
3. What would convince you that you are wrong?
4. Does adopting part of the approach give part of the benefit?
5. What are the negative effects?

The first of these questions is perhaps the hardest to answer succinctly. For the reasons already given, there isn't a recipe for providing feedback, so deciding exactly what to do involves weighing up pros and cons and selecting the possible approaches that look likely to improve the learners' performance.

Concrete suggestions follow later; this table, meanwhile, gives a preliminary response to each of Ashman's five questions:

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Question	Answer
1. What are you actually suggesting that we should do?	Look at ways of providing learners with targeted feedback that helps them to know how to improve their work. Examine ways of minimising the potential pitfalls of feedback as identified in research in this area.
2. What problems do your proposals solve?	Statistics show that, in the UK, the number of learners who reach age-appropriate abilities in literacy, numeracy and other skill areas decreases as they progress through education. This pattern suggests progressive disengagement from schooling, which results in dropout rates worsening the older the cohort. There is plenty of evidence suggesting that feedback improves educational outcomes.
3. What would convince you that you are wrong?	If there were no obvious reason for an increase in literacy and numeracy rates and achievement gaps, or if they increased due to government intervention, then carrying out this evidence-based intervention on providing effective feedback would not seem worthwhile. This would also be the case if more recent research studies established that the effects of feedback are not able to be reproduced.
4. Does adopting part of the approach give part of the benefit?	Perhaps, yes – provided that some of the negative impacts of feedback are avoided. Even if the intervention is not school-wide, and is followed up by only some teachers for some activities, learners would nevertheless receive some advice and guidance on ways to make further progress in their school-work.
5. What are the negative effects?	If feedback is not provided carefully, it can cause learners to view the learning activity, the teacher's attitude towards them, their own attitude towards school and education, and their own personal worth, less favourably. Also, giving feedback results in more work for the learner.

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Analysing the Current Situation

When analysing how to make feedback work effectively in your school, it's useful to determine the forms of feedback that your learners already experience. They're probably getting feedback in a range of ways – formal, informal and from several sources – for example marks, reports and peer reviews.

It's worth analysing the structures, routines, marking policies, subject-specific approaches, and the language used (formal, informal, written and/or spoken), that influence where and when these various instances of feedback occur. Who holds responsibility for them? How often are they revised? How coherent or disjointed is their application in practice?

It's also helpful to know the circumstances in which feedback is already proving to be effective or otherwise, and the reasons for this. These questions may be useful:

- Does it conflict with other priorities?
 - How long is it reasonable to allow for the intervention to become established and for us to make changes, if necessary, to help it to succeed?
 - How will we determine whether our efforts are working?
 - What can we do so that our efforts result in sustainable changes?
- Do we use these various instances of feedback consistently?
 - Do all teachers use similar forms of feedback, and do they all work equally well?
 - Which forms are used in which circumstances, and where is there room for improvement?
 - Is the status quo good enough that it would be better to look elsewhere for ways to drive improvement in learning?
 - Do all learners find the existing experiences of feedback beneficial?
 - Is there consensus among staff that it will be worth trying to improve the way feedback is used?
 - How can we involve parents in supporting our efforts?
 - What exactly can we do to refine and improve the use of feedback in the school?
 - How much time and space do we have available to give to this?

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Issues with Feedback

Before considering how to formulate feedback for various purposes, it's important to acknowledge the challenges involved in making feedback effective in the ways that the evidence suggests it can be. In his book *Embedded Formative Assessment* (2011), Dylan Wiliam cautions practitioners against viewing feedback as the ultimate solution. He makes several points about this.

Firstly, if it is to be useful, feedback has to provide the recipient with suggestions for a feasible course of action – so, for example, telling a learner that they need to be more analytical in their work is no help if they don't know how to be analytical in the first place. This is an instance where providing more instruction instead of feedback would be the better approach.

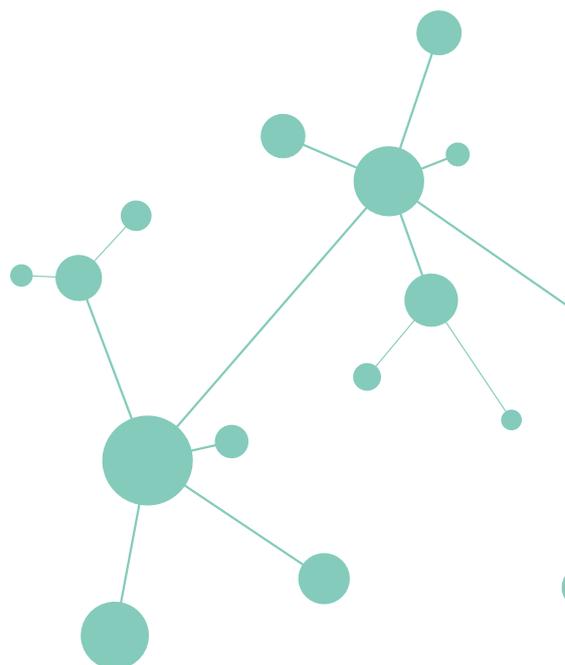
Secondly, feedback must be given at the right stage in the learning sequence. There's no point giving the feedback at the end of the instruction period if there's no opportunity for the recipients to then respond by changing something. In this sense, feedback is to do with progressive refinements to work in progress, and once it has been provided, recipients need time and scope to act on it.

Thirdly, the recipient needs to be prepared to undertake the action suggested in the feedback. Wiliam emphasises that, in most responses to feedback, the recipient rejects the feedback because they perceive the goal as either unreachable or not worth the effort. This is because they interpret feedback as indicating that there's something wrong with the work – something that's outside of their control ('I'm no good at this') or due to unfair bias ('The teacher hates me'). It's only if they approach the feedback with the attitude that they can achieve more that the recipient will respond the next time by doing something constructive. Too often, they reject the feedback because the implicit message is unacceptable to their ego needs, or indicates that they achieved the goal easily and, therefore, can relax their efforts.

Even to a diligent learner, it can appear that all they get for working hard is yet more work; it can feel like the teacher only ever reacts to good work by setting the standard even higher. This is especially problematic if the recipient experiences the feedback as a reaction to them personally, rather than to their work.

This highlights how difficult it is to meet the conditions for feedback to be effective.

The edublogger David Didau has responded to Wiliam's observations with some practical suggestions about implementing feedback. He emphasises Wiliam's warning that it's difficult to get feedback right, and cautions that the risks associated with giving feedback centre on the affective domain: how the recipient feels. Didau suggests that teachers should focus feedback on aspects of the task and avoid any form of words implying that the problem lies with the recipient's personality. Again, feedback is about how you talk to people; if you take the wrong approach, your communication itself fails and you also alienate the very person you were trying to help.



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Three Modes for Feedback

It can be useful to think of feedback as bridging the gap between where the learner is now, and where the desired endpoint of successful learning will be. The bridge metaphor highlights three stages of teaching and learning that are referenced repeatedly in academic research on education: 'Where am I now? Where do I want to be? How do I get there?'

In *Visible Learning for Teachers* (2012), Hattie identifies three modes for feedback. These represent ways of addressing the learner and supporting them with encouragement and supplementary information to help them over the gap between where they are now and where they want to be:

1. Affective

emotional, motivational, encouraging, prompting, supporting

'Yes, go on, you can do it, that's it!'

'Keep trying... One more time, nearly there.'

2. Procedural

process, skill, method, technique

'Remember, first you need to do (a), then you need to add (b), next do (c), and that's how you get to (d)...'

3. Cognitive

knowledge, understanding, insight, thought processes

'What do you know about ... that would help explain ... here?'

'Remember to use the principle of...'

'It would be better to use the equation ... for this kind of calculation.'

'You need to refer to...'

'Don't forget to mention the issues from...'

'Use what you know about...'

'What would be more convincing here?'

'Is that strictly accurate?'

'What would be a scientific approach to that?'

In practice, any instance of feedback is likely to combine aspects of all three modes. Some aspects of the communication are likely to be tacit, and not immediately within the teacher's conscious control. For example, body language, tone of voice, and even the timing of the feedback, and whether it's verbal, written, given in a class environment or out of others' hearing, will impact on how learners receive and interpret it.

While it can be difficult to tailor all these aspects of feedback every time, if you don't address the learner on these levels, you're not optimising the constructiveness of your feedback.

There's also a fourth attitudinal dimension – to do with motivation. See the section on attitudes and dispositions below.

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The Recipient's Response to Feedback

These three aspects of providing feedback can help the learner to improve their performance and reach the desired goal, by:

- encouraging them to increase their efforts, try harder, use all the resources available to them;
- giving pointers on the process or technique necessary to move on; or
- drawing attention to principles the learner knows about but has not yet mastered, or has missed, elided or referred to inadequately, and which, when the learner modifies them or uses them differently, will produce the desired result.

All three modes supplement, refine, correct and/or advise on learners' knowledge of how they can better use factors already to some degree within their control.

The most obvious of these factors is the subject content – the knowledge and processes – that you've taught the learners. They can manipulate this using your feedback, aiming to achieve the desired learning outcome.

There's also the question of how to present the feedback. Learners can take even quite critical feedback on board when the teacher presents it in a way that is supportive and when it enables improved performance. Where learners experience feedback as a reproof rather than help, they will most likely reject and ignore it.

A lot of the research on the effectiveness of feedback in improving educational outcomes draws on studies conducted in a higher education setting, not in the primary or post-primary phases. The findings are, nevertheless, applicable to school-age learners. The research shows that, in the early stages of learning something new, feedback on success is effective and drawing attention to shortcomings is more problematic.

Once learners are more secure and no longer operating at a novice level, then they want more feedback on how to improve, how to fix errors and how to avoid mistakes.

These considerations emphasise the need to know your audience and to customise your feedback appropriately. That's especially important in terms of not mistaking giving praise for providing feedback.

Feedback and Praise

An important part of this customising is knowing the difference between feedback and praise. Superficially, it seems like acknowledging crossing the gap between not knowing and knowing, and praising the achievement of reaching the goal, is also a form of feedback: the performer is receiving some response to their performance.

However, Hattie and others firmly separate praise from the strict definition of feedback in the context of education. Praise is separate because it affects subsequent learning much less than other forms of feedback. Having your successes acknowledged can be a positive experience and increase motivation, but the evidence is clear on this point: feedback makes the most difference where it helps the recipient to enhance an already positive performance, for example 'That was pretty good, but if you also did ... , you'd be doing even better' or 'Great! Now you're ready to try also including...'. Feedback is less effective when it's just pointing out mistakes and shortcomings because the resulting disappointment invites various avoidance behaviours.

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Attitudes and Dispositions

It's worth looking again at the bridge metaphor to see why learners react in these ways. To build the bridge of effective feedback, the teacher must be able to influence some additional factors within the learner's affective domain, such as their sense of self, self-esteem, confidence, emotional resilience, self-belief and attitudes to learning.

These attitudes and dispositions are much more difficult to influence directly than the procedural or cognitive factors. They involve how the learner perceives themselves and how they relate to school, the subject, their teachers and their peers. Without the stable base of the learner's willingness to engage, providing feedback to enhance progress in learning has much less potential for success.

However, when learners see themselves acquiring new knowledge and mastering new techniques, they grow in confidence, resilience and the appetite for new challenges: hence the power of feedback in the right circumstances. Most of us need to experience this success continually from the earliest stages of our educational development; a lack of this positive experience becomes increasingly difficult to remedy in classroom settings.

Learning Intentions, Success Criteria and the Parameters for Understanding Feedback

Consider again the three questions 'Where am I now?', 'Where do I want to be?' and 'How can I get there?' These illuminate the conditions that enable feedback to work in the way the evidence suggests it can.

The question 'Where do I want to be?' relates directly to the teacher planning a sequence of instruction; this is the arena of learning intentions and success criteria.

For feedback to be effective, teachers must communicate clearly the specific learning intentions and success criteria for the sequence of instruction. Very often, they use simply the subject topic as the learning intention. To a mature learner, the topic title often supplies enough information to grasp what's involved. A novice learner, however, perhaps meeting the terms for the first time, doesn't have associations and examples to draw upon to help them recognise what the topic involves. They need some context and some rationale to get a sense of how the new material is related to things they have already learned and/or experienced.

In the context of a subject discipline, consistently using carefully constructed success criteria helps your learners to appreciate what's valued and why.

In *Visible Learning for Teachers*, Hattie expounds on the work of Joo Gan in training classes to undertake peer assessment and provide each other with feedback. Hattie makes the point that initiating learners into the process of formulating feedback clarifies the details of what's being assessed, and also trains them in responding to feedback.

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Gan recommends helping learners to identify that feedback can be targeted at the task, the process employed in responding to the task, or at the ability of the learner to self-regulate during the assessment activity. This is a useful distinction to draw, as it provides learners with progressively deeper insight into the assessment processes and trains them in acting on feedback. In Gan's approach, the learners use prompt questions displayed as a graphic organiser that illustrates feedback at the task, process and self-regulation levels.

At the task level of feedback, the emphasis is on discriminating what was correct, what was accurate, from what was mistaken or inadequate. At the process level, the feedback adds detail about why the learner has erred. Finally, at the self-regulation level, the feedback engages with the learner's own insight into the means they used during the activity. The feedback targets the learner's awareness of their own self-monitoring, and how they might amend, reproduce or refine responses in equivalent future circumstances. Having a 'nose for quality' is a useful way of describing the ability that you want learners to develop: recognising the qualities in their performance.³

Seen in this context, feedback is more meaningful and more practical – it becomes clearer to the learners what they should do in response.

How Do I Get There?

Recognising a course of action likely to produce the desired learning outcome is like following a recipe or map-reading – knowing the archetypal sequence of actions well means that, if your efforts don't turn out as expected, you know how to get back on course.

At this stage, the teacher can guide learners by providing feedback at the level of self-regulation, helping to develop the learner's insight into monitoring their own progress over the course of an activity.

Over time, the situation becomes more complicated, because there are multiple possible ways of achieving their desired outcome and learners must choose from these.

It is in building habits of self-regulation that feedback has the potential to improve learning outcomes; once the learner has internalised the feedback, they become better at reproducing the error-detection routines that, in the early stages of their learning, they relied on the teacher to point out.

Knowing What to Do With Feedback

This is one of the most difficult aspects of using feedback to get right. Unless the learner knows how to respond to feedback and is willing to respond, all the effort of providing feedback is wasted.

In a recent piece of work investigating the reasons why learners don't always act on feedback, Robert Nash and Naomi Winstone concluded that often, for a variety of reasons, the recipients don't understand the feedback they receive, and consequently they don't know how to act on it. Although Nash and Winstone focus on undergraduates, many of the factors they analyse apply equally to school-age learners.

As a result of these findings, Nash and Winstone produced a resource called *Developing Engagement with Feedback Toolkit*. Many of the approaches that they consider can be reinterpreted for use with younger age groups. These include – similar to Gan's recommendation – training learners in responding to feedback to increase the likelihood of them acting on it successfully.

³ '[N]ose for quality' is a term coined by Guy Claxton in *Building Learning Power: Helping Young People Become Better Learners* (2002) and quoted by Dylan Wiliam in *Embedded Formative Assessment* (2011).

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Summary

There is a good deal of convincing evidence that improving the quality of feedback and how recipients act on the feedback is a logical way to try to improve outcomes in education.

The evidence comes with a warning that superficial interpretations are unlikely to succeed, and may be actively detrimental. We should particularly avoid the simplistic assumption that, if feedback is a good thing, then more feedback must be better.

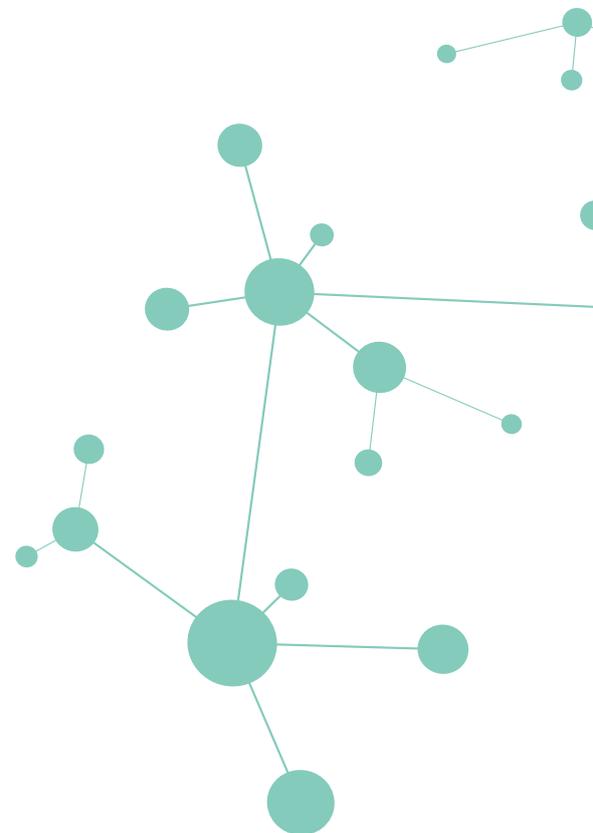
The suggested approaches to feedback include ensuring that it is possible for the recipient to implement it, and that the feedback is timely and specific.

These approaches also come with warnings that timeliness is a matter of judgement, as is specificity, and also the usefulness of the advice given and the time available to act on it.

It's also worth bearing in mind that, at some level, giving feedback is intrinsic to teaching; it can be thought of as responsive teaching. It's about communicating, and knowing who you're communicating with will help in deciding how best to deliver your message.

The teacher must take two almost mutually exclusive approaches simultaneously: the first is maintaining unconditional positive regard towards the recipient of the feedback, like the care of a counsellor for those they are counselling. The second is continuously insisting on improvement from the recipient, like a sports coach's constant demand for better performance by their athletes.

Finally, feedback also involves helping the learner to adopt habits of self-regulation in their work. You want the learner to move towards more independence. This, in turn, implies that they must acquire metacognitive habits in order to first internalise the factors feedback is directing them towards, then later be able to reproduce the teacher's error-checking so that they don't repeat earlier mistakes. All carried out while not forgetting that we don't know what we don't know, so an external observer giving feedback can be useful, but if you're insecure, also threatening. Effective feedback optimises the usefulness of the advice offered while minimising the threat.



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Reflecting on Feedback

- Used well, feedback has the potential to make big differences.
- Feedback requires a response from the recipient.
- Feedback is a specific instance of communication.
- Feedback is about how you talk to people.
- The first feedback is gathered by the teacher: seeing how things are going.
- Feedback needs careful forethought; the teacher should:
 - deliver the feedback at the right time; and
 - know their learner.
- Potentially negative effects or unintended consequences of feedback are closely tied to the recipient's ego needs.
- Feedback is a way of making reflection productive.
- Feedback should result in more work for the learner, not more work for the teacher.
- Feedback needs to come in a form the recipient understands and knows how to implement.
- Teachers must provide feedback in time for the learner to implement the suggestions.
- Feedback bridges the gap between current performance and targeted performance.
- Feedback can use affect, process, and cognition when suggesting improvements.
- Feedback does the bridging by providing:
 - correctives;
 - advice;
 - refinements;
 - reminders;
 - supplements;
 - encouragement; and/or
 - reassurance.
- Feedback can only influence factors already to some degree within the recipient's control.
- Instruction comes first, feedback later; there has to be something to give feedback on.
- Praise doesn't count as feedback.
- Feedback on performance works best when it enhances an existing level of success rather than merely detecting mistakes.
- For feedback to be coherent, the learning intentions and success criteria must be clear. Learning intentions and success criteria set the parameters for feedback.
- Learners may need training in how to respond to feedback before they can use it effectively.
- Feedback guides the recipient towards:
 - more fruitful lines of enquiry;
 - extension activities;
 - consolidation;
 - increasing challenge; and
 - readiness for more independence.
- Most teachers think they're providing more feedback than they really are.
- Most feedback comes from peers, and is also inaccurate or wrong.
- Feedback need not be expensive to implement.

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Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment (Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam, 1998)
<http://weaeducation.typepad.co.uk/files/blackbox-1.pdf>

Visible Learning: What works best for learning
<http://visible-learning.org>

Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit: Feedback
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback>

SSAT meets Professor Rob Coe: Part 1 – Proper research is what identifies great teaching
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The Learning Spy – Getting feedback right Part 2: How do we provide clarity?
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The Learning Spy – Getting feedback right Part 3: How can we increase pupils' effort?
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The Effects of Prompts and Explicit Coaching on Peer Feedback Quality (Joo Gan, 2011)
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Providing Effective Feedback

Implications for Teaching and Learning

Links

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Higher Education Academy: The Developing Engagement with Feedback Toolkit (DEFT)

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