

Early Career Framework

Core Induction Programme

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- > Week 4: Giving high-quality feedback

Week

4: Giving high-quality feedback

Session Elements

- self-assessment
- discuss with a colleague
- analyse artefacts
- reflection
- discuss with pupils

Learning Intentions for this session

You will learn that:

6.4 To be of value, teachers use information from assessments to inform the decisions they make; in turn, pupils must be able to act on feedback for it to have an effect.

6.5 High-quality feedback can be written or verbal; it is likely to be accurate and clear, encourage further effort, and provide specific guidance on how to improve.

You will learn that:

6.6 Over time, feedback should support pupils to monitor and regulate their own learning.

You will learn how to:

Provide high-quality feedback, by:

6h. Focusing on specific actions for pupils and providing time for pupils to respond to feedback.

6i. Appreciating that pupils' responses to feedback can vary depending on a range of social factors (e.g. the message the feedback contains or the age of the child).

6j. Scaffolding self-assessment by sharing model work with pupils, highlighting key details.

6k. Thinking carefully about how to ensure feedback is specific and helpful when using peer- or self-assessment.

Introduction

In this module so far, you have focused on how you gather information about your pupils' learning. In this self-study session, you will focus on what you do with this information, extending your knowledge about giving high-quality feedback.

You will explore how assessment information can be used to inform your decision making and the feedback pupils receive, as well as how they can use this feedback to move forward in their learning. With practice, pupils will increasingly be able to monitor and self-regulate their own learning through self-assessment. You will learn that the key to effective feedback is that it provides specific guidance, either verbal or written, that is clear and accurate, and that pupils are given the opportunity to act on it.

Research and Practice Summary

This reading will help you understand some of the theory behind this week's topic. We will start by introducing some of the key concepts (these are in bold). You will also see some suggestions of how to put these concepts into practice. **When using these concepts in your own practice you will need to take account of your**

pupils' characteristics, the context of your classroom and the nature of the material that you are teaching.

Giving high-quality feedback

Helen and Aaron have been marking their Year 3 English books together and are really pleased with how much their pupils have improved since September. They have been discussing how to make the most of feedback and realise that they disagree about some key ideas. Helen believes the following:

- the more feedback you give pupils, the better
- written feedback is more powerful than verbal feedback

Aaron disagrees. He says that Helen has developed some common misconceptions about feedback.

What do you think? Who do you agree with? In your judgement, what is most important about effective feedback?

Feedback is information given to the pupil or teacher about the pupil's performance relative to the intended learning. It is a key component of high-quality teaching and can dramatically affect learning, both positively and negatively. When giving feedback to pupils, it is important to get the details right – details both of what feedback is given and how it is given.

Last week you learned about how to use approaches to assessment to gather useful information about your pupils' understanding, including any misconceptions that they might hold. This data gathering is the first stage of high-quality assessment practice, as it provides feedback to the teacher. The impact on pupils' learning depends on what is done next with this information:

- first, the teacher needs to process the information that they collect: ask yourself 'what does this tell me about pupils' current understanding?' and 'who needs to take what action now to move pupils' learning on?'
- then, the teacher needs to take, or support pupils to take, the action identified. This might be adapting teaching so that it takes account of current pupil understanding (perhaps to address misconceptions or to build on sound existing understanding); it might also be to give feedback to pupils so that they can do something to improve their learning further

There are lots of ways to categorise approaches to giving high-quality feedback to pupils, including:

- **what the feedback is about** – it can be about the person (e.g. how much effort was put into the work), products of learning (e.g. a piece of written or practical work) or about the learning process itself (e.g. how the pupil approached a task)
- **who gives the feedback** – feedback can be provided by a teacher, peers, pupils themselves or using digital technology
- **how the feedback is given** – it can be written, verbal, non-verbal (e.g. a nod of reinforcement, a physical gesture that models a practical activity)
- **when the feedback is given** – feedback can be immediate or delayed
- **how public the feedback is** – in busy classrooms, even one-to-one feedback can sometimes be picked up by other pupils: the message in the feedback should determine how public the feedback should be

There is no one ‘best’ approach to giving feedback. When providing any feedback, it is necessary to match it to your pupils’ characteristics and learning needs and to the nature of what is being learned. A quick verbal correction during a class discussion or a brief one-to-one chat while a pupil completes an extended activity are sometimes as powerful as detailed written comments in a pupil’s workbook. Messages of praise may be given publicly, whereas more challenging feedback may best be given privately and with the opportunity for pupils to clarify understanding in detail.

Using the categories above may help you to think more critically about the options available to you, and the choices you make, as you plan and teach lessons.

Helen’s belief that ‘written feedback is more powerful than verbal feedback’ is clearly incorrect. We could re-write this as ‘sometimes, written feedback is more powerful than verbal feedback’. As so often in teaching, the choice the teacher makes in any given situation should draw on their understanding of critical features of the context to select a suitable approach for that situation.

More feedback is not necessarily better. Research syntheses, such as the Education Endowment Foundation’s Teaching and Learning Toolkit, suggest that feedback is most effective when it is used sparingly, for a number of reasons.

Too much feedback, especially focusing on weaknesses, can be dispiriting.

Providing excessive feedback can also cause cognitive overload, reducing pupils’ ability to process the feedback successfully. Even if pupils can process a lot of feedback at once, excessive volume can be overwhelming and confusing, meaning that pupils struggle to separate out, and take on board, key messages. Therefore, when giving feedback, you should consider what to prioritise and what may more

helpfully be left out. It may be helpful to consider, ‘what is the best next step in learning?’

Helen’s belief that ‘the more feedback you give, the better’ is also incorrect. Teachers who give too much feedback in one go may actually reduce the benefit that pupils get from it.

To ensure that your use of feedback contributes to pupils’ learning, you should:

- **be accurate** – effective feedback needs to be based on an accurate assessment of pupils’ learning
- **be clear** – consider how you can ensure pupils understand feedback received (verbal and non-verbal feedback in the moment is sometimes more powerful than written feedback after the event, for example; opportunities for clarification also help to ensure that pupils understand fully)
- **be specific about what pupils should do** – focus on specific actions for the pupil (e.g. rather than saying ‘you need more detail here’, say ‘add a paragraph explaining how you reached this conclusion’ and provide pupils with suitable prompts to support them in doing this)
- **encourage further effort** – recognise effort as well as attainment in the feedback you give (e.g. ‘I can see that you’ve worked hard to make this progress in your work. Keep going; you can do this’)
- **develop self-regulation** – provide feedback on the process as well as the products of learning (e.g. ‘the plan that you wrote at the beginning really helped you to structure your writing clearly into strong paragraphs’). Self-regulation is also developed by teaching your pupils how to peer- and self-assess
- **provide opportunities to act on feedback** – this requires allocating lesson time or incorporating it into home learning
- **know your pupils** – tailor your language, feedback and tone to the characteristics of your specific pupils, while maintaining and demonstrating high expectations of all

Improving feedback

Aaron and Helen shared some examples of feedback that they’d written for pupils recently on some English homework. **Which do you think better exemplifies the characteristics of high-quality feedback?**

Helen had written:

I like your story. It was exciting, and you used some good words. It would be better if you used more adjectives.

Aaron had written:

Well done for working so carefully on this story. The way you used adjectives like ‘exciting’ and ‘dramatic’ helped to add tension, as we discussed in class. To improve this work further, you could use paragraphs to organise your writing so that the reader can follow the story more easily. You can do this during ‘review time’ on Thursday.

Helen’s feedback is too vague to be helpful and could further confuse her pupil. They will not be clear from this feedback what ‘good’ words are, for example.

Aaron’s feedback is of higher quality as he is more specific than Helen, both in describing what is good about the work (with specific examples from the text) and how and when it can be further improved. This means the pupil should be better able to self-assess and improve their writing in the future.

However, Aaron’s comment is also quite long and detailed, which could make it harder for his pupil to act on the feedback. It also assumes that the pupil knows how to use paragraphs appropriately. Aaron could restructure his comment to make it more likely that the pupil will get the most from it:

WWW: Exciting adjectives!

EBI: New time or place = NP.

Task: Rewrite highlighted section in three paragraphs.

It might be helpful for Aaron to provide specific examples of exciting adjectives, but if he judges that the pupil clearly understands how to use them effectively, this might be unnecessary.

In week 1 of Module 4, you looked at formative and summative assessment. As part of formative assessment, peer-assessment and self-assessment can be valuable tools that enable pupils to monitor and improve their own progress against agreed success criteria. However, pupils first need to be trained in how to do this well, and the approaches work best alongside teacher assessment rather than as alternatives. Assessment can add significantly to a teacher’s workload, so it is

important to become familiar with your school's expectations and to learn from colleagues.

Peer-assessment can positively affect achievement and improve self-regulation. When pupils assess each other's work and give feedback, this is peer-assessment. Peer-assessment offers multiple benefits when structured and scaffolded appropriately, including:

- helping pupils focus on the learning process, not simply the outcomes (which often happens with teacher assessment)
- it can be very timely, compared to pupils waiting for written feedback from the teacher
- pupils learn how to apply their critical process to their own work
- it can reduce the teacher's workload when done well

Peer relationships may influence the effectiveness of peer-assessment. Teachers should be careful to ensure their pupils understand the success criteria for a task before expecting them to use the criteria to assess their peers.

Self-assessment is when pupils work with their teachers to agree a set of success criteria against which they can assess their current performance. It is most useful when deployed formatively (while a task is ongoing). Self-assessment will be allied with a set of 'targets-for-self', steps the pupil sets themselves to improve upon their work. Self-assessment has similar benefits as peer-assessment and is a key element in formative assessment. It is good way of teaching pupils to monitor and regulate their own learning.

Supporting pupils in monitoring and regulating their own learning

Helen is pleased with the quality of her class's writing so far. Now she wants them to do more to monitor and regulate their own learning. Specifically, she would like her pupils to edit their own writing for common errors, including basic punctuation.

Helen decides that she can use peer-assessment to support this, especially as pupils are often reluctant to revise and edit their own work. Helen knows that effective peer-assessment takes careful planning so begins by modelling the process of self-editing for her class. She uses a visualiser and thinks aloud to share her thought processes as she assesses a short piece of writing that she created as a model. By doing this, Helen is further clarifying what good writing looks like (sharing

success criteria) and supporting pupils to better understand how they can edit work themselves.

Next, Helen provides structured opportunities for pupils to peer-assess each other's work. As part of this, she helps her pupils to better understand how to give effective feedback, highlighting how to make this specific and helpful. She gives pupils a framework for feeding back on 'two stars and a wish', using sentence stems such as 'a strength of your work is...' and 'one way to improve this is...'. Her pupils are now more able to accurately review each other's work and provide appropriate feedback. As they practise peer-assessment, they become more confident and skilled in assessing the quality of writing. Finally, Helen supports her pupils in applying this new competence to their own writing.

To help you to improve the quality of peer- and self-assessment, you should:

- share clear success criteria and revisit these before (and even during) the activity – ensure that pupils understand these criteria by, for example, asking them to express the criteria in their own words
- scaffold activities by sharing models of good work (e.g. with a visualiser or interactive whiteboard) and identifying how their key features meet the success criteria
- explain why you are teaching pupils to self-assess: this helps pupils focus on the processes behind their learning and not simply the outcomes (which can be the case when they are assessed by their teacher); self-assessment enhances metacognitive thinking
- think carefully about how to ensure feedback is specific and helpful when using peer-assessment (e.g. by asking pupils to highlight a limited number of improvements to their partner's work and to give clear examples of how to act on each improvement)
- carefully match your pupils during peer-assessment to reduce tensions that can arise when pupils provide feedback to each other
- explain to your pupils that there are benefits to giving feedback as well as receiving it – it can help the assessor to develop a better understanding of the most effective approaches to take to complete a task well
- invite your pupils to feed back to each other on how it felt to be peer assessed (this can build mutual trust and cooperation)

Combining feedback approaches as part of a learning cycle in GCSE business

Alessia has a clear structure to the feedback that she provides on substantial pieces of pupils' work. She makes sure that her feedback covers the following, using the acronym SIT.

Strengths: these are elements of the work that are good. Alessia highlights strengths throughout the text using yellow highlighter, then writes a summary at the end which helps pupils to understand why they are strengths. For example, 'This is a strong evaluation because you are using key concepts (elasticity and demand) to justify why the business should take a particular action in this situation (reduce costs rather than raise prices).'

Improvements: Alessia highlights one part of the text in green and writes guidance at the end of the work for pupils which tells them how and why this section needs improving. Pupils are expected to re-work this part of the text during dedicated classroom time. For example, 'Improve your analysis in this paragraph by explaining the steps in your reasoning that link raising prices to falling overall revenue. Use connectives such as 'this should lead to' and 'as a consequence' to build your chain of reasoning.' Alessia keeps the improvements focused and manageable so she doesn't overwhelm pupils.

Targets: Alessia identifies a target that each pupil should address in future work. For example, 'Extend lines of reasoning so that you always develop your arguments fully. Aim for at least 3 steps in each chain of analysis.'

When pupils start their next substantial piece of work, Alessia asks them to write their previous target at the top of their work. When they have finished the task, pupils write a comment next to the target to self-assess the extent to which they have met it. They also circle the part of their work where they feel they have best demonstrated this target.

This approach builds clarity into Alessia's feedback so that pupils understand how to improve. It combines short-cycle feedback (on the immediate task, which is addressed in the following lesson) and medium-cycle feedback (which looks forward to the next piece of work). Having pupils comment on how they have met their target also helps Alessia to judge the extent to which each pupil has understood her feedback and develops pupils' self-regulation and ability to self-assess.

Self-Study Activities

Review: 10 mins

Read the Research and Practice Summary on this week's topic. As you read, reflect on:

1. the practices that you are already doing well
2. the practices you are doing some of the time but could do more of/more consistently
3. the practices you do not use in your teaching yet

As you work through the activities in this week's self-directed study session and mentor meeting, aim to both refine and extend what you already do well and to build your skill and confidence in using practices which are not yet a regular part of your teaching repertoire.

Plan: 5 mins

Self-assessment

Now use the ideas in the Research and Practice Summary to reflect in greater depth on your own feedback practice in relation to how you give feedback.

You might ask yourself:

- how accurate and clear is my feedback typically?
- to what extent does my feedback encourage further effort from pupils?
- is my feedback specific enough for pupils to improve?
- what opportunities do I generally give pupils to act on feedback?
- how does my feedback support pupils to increasingly monitor and regulate their own learning?

Theory to Practice: 25 mins

You have a range of activities to engage with this week. Choose one or two of these activities that are most suited to your teaching context and learning needs.

1. Analyse artefacts / reflect

Collect a few samples of written feedback that you have given recently. If you do not give written feedback often in your phase/specialism, briefly note the details of some verbal feedback that you have given recently. Review these samples of your own feedback on pupils' work and note where they reflect characteristics of high-quality feedback.

1. Connect these characteristics to the Research and Practice Summary for this session and to the guide questions in the previous activity. Where can you see opportunities to further improve your feedback?
2. Having analysed some physical examples of your own feedback, consider how accurate you were in your reflections on feedback practice in the Review activity. Do you want to modify your self-assessment now that you have looked at samples of your feedback? What does this tell you about reflecting on and self-assessing your own practice, if anything?

2. Discuss with pupils

If possible, arrange to **talk to a few pupils** in your school about their views on feedback. They don't have to be pupils that you teach.

You might explore:

- how they understand the purpose of feedback
- whether they prefer verbal or written feedback and why
- what kind of action they typically take in response to feedback received
- what they think the relationship is between receiving feedback and their learning

3. Discuss with a colleague

Talk to a colleague about realistic expectations for how independent and self-regulating pupils should be when they enter/leave each age range/phase/year in your setting. Reflect on your own expectations to date of pupils and how you might adjust these in light of your conversation, if at all.

Make notes in your Learning Log, if you are using one, about what you have learned from the previous activities. Note how you will draw on this learning to further improve the impact of your own practice in relation to giving verbal and written feedback.

Next Steps: 5 mins

While teaching during the coming week, make a point of connecting learning from this session to your practice by:

- reflecting on the sort of feedback you give to your pupils and how this relates to the characteristics of high-quality feedback that you have learned about
- focusing on how you create opportunities for pupils to act on your feedback
- noticing specifically the impact this seems to have on their learning

Write a reminder to yourself to capture key learning from this activity in your Learning Log, if you are using one.

Be ready to share this and your other learning from this session with your mentor in your next meeting with them.



[Previous Week — 3: Applying good assessment practice in the classroom \(https://www.early-career-framework.education.gov.uk/ucl/ucl/2-understanding-teachers-as-role-models/4-making-productive-use-of-assessment/3-applying-good-assessment-practice-in-the-classroom/\)](https://www.early-career-framework.education.gov.uk/ucl/ucl/2-understanding-teachers-as-role-models/4-making-productive-use-of-assessment/3-applying-good-assessment-practice-in-the-classroom/)

[Next Week — 5: Planning effective and manageable marking and feedback](#) 

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