

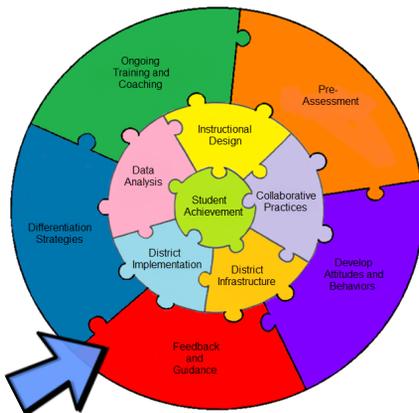
Critical Question: #2

How do we teach effectively to ensure students are learning? (DO)

How does the work of leaders support an effective educational system?

Fundamental Practice 8. Students receive feedback and guidance to develop understanding of their performance, improve their achievement, monitor their progress, and identify goals for learning (assessment as learning).

Teacher feedback to students plays an important role in student engagement, motivation, and persistence. To maximize student growth, students must receive timely, ongoing, actionable feedback regarding their performance and learning in class and on assessments (assessments as learning). John Hattie (2009) analyzed 1,287 studies on feedback and found that effective feedback has one of the greatest effects on student learning of any instructional strategy. He suggests that effective feedback provides cues and reinforcement regarding a student's current performance and the progress of his/her learning when a student acts on that feedback. Feedback allows students to understand their own levels of performance, identify what they need to learn or do, set clear targets for what they should learn next, and identify strategies to effectively learn. His and other studies have shown that when students have knowledge of their learning results and feedback about their learning processes, engagement in learning and motivation to improve are enhanced (Davies, 2000, 2007; Dwech, 2000; Hattie, 2009, 2010, 2012; Hunter, 2004).



Guiding Questions:

- How and when are students being provided information about their learning?
- How are students being provided with effective feedback, and what is the effect of feedback on their learning?
- How are schools teaching students to set their own learning goals?
- How do students determine what they must do to achieve their own learning goals?
- How are classrooms providing opportunities for students to give/ receive feedback to their peers?

Reflections:

1. As a leader, what is my role in ensuring this fundamental practice is taking place in my district and schools?
2. What are current barriers that are getting in the way of successfully implementing this fundamental practice systemically in my district and schools?
3. When I return to my district/school, I will complete the following three action steps to begin enhancing our (my and my staff's) application of this fundamental practice:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____



Feedback might be described in three different ways:

- Descriptive feedback (as discussed above) that provides students with guidance in how to improve (e.g., “here’s a strategy you can use to solve this problem,” “this section needs more development with descriptive details,” etc.);
- Motivational feedback that recognizes growth and accurate performance but doesn’t provide other guidance (e.g., “good job,” “great effort in solving that complex problem,” “your writing is showing improvement,” etc.); and
- Evaluative feedback intended to summarize student achievement with no guidance regarding how to improve (e.g., “you got a “B” on this assignment,” “you didn’t meet the standard for mastery,” “2 out of 4”, etc.).

Research has revealed that 73% of feedback given to students is evaluative (Davies, 2007), and when only evaluative feedback such as letter grades or summary ratings are used, there is likely to be a negative effect on learning for all students, particularly low-achieving students (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Dweck, 2000; Hattie, 1992, 2005).

Consequently, feedback needs to be descriptive and explained in ways that students are able to understand; is in comparison to models, exemplars, or descriptions; is specific to the performance; comes during, as well as after the learning; is always designed with the intention to reinforce or improve students’ learning processes and outcomes; and is about the performance, not the person (Davies, 2000).

Hattie (2009) suggests that feedback should always ask:

- What should the student be learning (goals, success criteria, and student focus/intentions)?
- How are students currently performing (teacher and student self-assessment and evaluation)?
- What do students need to learn and do next (actions, next steps, growth goals)?

Hattie also suggests that feedback from students to teachers can provide valuable information to teachers about their instructional practices and the effect of their instruction on students’ learning. He suggests that when teachers are open to understanding what and how their students are learning and where they make errors or have misconceptions, teachers can more effectively adjust their instruction to meet the identified needs of the students.



Connect to Resources

For additional resources on this topic, visit the critical question 2, fundamental practice #8 section of the toolkit.