

Feedback Case Study



RECOGNISING THE VALUE OF QUALITY FEEDBACK

CLANCY CATHOLIC COLLEGE
WEST HOXTON, NSW



- ⌘ METROPOLITAN
- ⌘ CATHOLIC
- ⌘ SECONDARY 7 - 12
- ⌘ ICSEA 1020
- ⌘ 82 TEACHERS
- ⌘ 1135 STUDENTS
- ⌘ LBOTE 56%
- ⌘ INDIGENOUS STUDENTS 1%

(Accessed from MySchool - May 2017)

Identifying a need

Clancy Catholic College has experienced rapid growth in student numbers since opening in 2006. A school review in 2012 highlighted difficulties in developing a coordinated focus on supporting students to improve, so staff developed a whole-school plan focused on lifelong, student-centred learning. This included an all-staff workshop on John Hattie's research on feedback, supported by videos of students sharing their experiences of feedback.

Once the staff articulated their goals for excellence, innovation and creativity, they recognised that their current feedback practices could be more effective. Teachers were concerned that students were only looking at their marks, rather than attending to and acting on the qualitative feedback provided.

“ I showed students the measures that John Hattie has developed [and] when they see what's attributed to feedback, they actually sit up. ”

Iris Nastasi – Principal

KEY IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES

Parental involvement is supported by using an app that lets them know when students have received feedback. Parents are encouraged to use the same language of feedback as teachers and students.

Regular pilot marking meetings are held to ensure consistency of assessment and feedback.

A data wall in the staff room displays images of students along with their learning needs. It is used to help teachers track when they have tackled a particular need, promoting visibility and accountability for the implementation of school practices.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. **Identified a need** for a whole-school approach to learning and feedback.
2. **Communicated to students** the research evidence on the impact of feedback.
3. **Focused professional development** for teachers in Key Learning Areas on feedback.
4. **Informed** parents, carers and students of new practices that would be implemented, and encouraged a consistent language of learning and feedback.
5. **Built student capacity** to assess themselves and others based on learning goals and success criteria.
6. **Used digital technologies** to provide feedback to students and to gauge the impact of feedback strategies on learning.

Implementation narrative

The college started implementation by securing buy-in from the students. Staff delivered three presentations to senior students on John Hattie's work on effect sizes and the impact of feedback, explaining the value of the approach.

Teachers and school leaders used the work of John Hattie and Helen Timperley to drive a focus on the questions of "Where am I now?" "Where am I going?" and "How will I get there?"

The leadership team challenged staff to develop a mnemonic to describe the approach to teaching and learning in their context, grounded in feedback. They landed on **"WHERE TO"**:

- W** - Work samples are provided to help students understand the features of quality work
- H** - Helpful
- E** - Effective, as teachers are constantly measuring their impact
- R** - Reciprocal, as teachers receive feedback as well as giving it
- E** - Encouraging
- T** - Timely
- O** - Ongoing.

Teachers adopted this mnemonic and used bookmarks as a way to share it with students.

Key Learning Area (KLA) staff commenced and continue to meet three times each term, using the time for their professional learning on feedback. Each KLA group has developed a different feedback plan to reflect their individual areas of focus aligned to the school's annual improvement plan. All professional learning is mapped to the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*.

KEY FEEDBACK PRACTICES

Teachers share with students spreadsheets of achievement data and samples of student work.

Students use this to identify if their results are consistent with those of other students, what type of questions they may not have answered well, etc. This also informs the students how their cohort is performing in relation to examples of increasing quality of work.

Assessment marking criteria are unpacked

and work samples shared during class time so students understand what they are learning and the elements of quality work.

Peer feedback and self-assessment are

informed and enabled by unpacking the criteria and teacher guidance.

Videos and online shared documents

are used to keep feedback engaging and accessible. Students can revisit feedback to review elements they may have missed or not understood. Students must acknowledge comments on shared documents to “resolve” them.

Consistent feedback is given across the entire year level

as all marking across that cohort for a given assessment is undertaken by one or two teachers. They then distribute notes about common problem areas to their colleagues and the students.

Students are supported to set their own goals

based on feedback they receive. They are continually challenged to identify the practical steps they will take to achieve their goals. Teachers keep track of whether students are engaging in those steps and whether they result in the desired improvement.



The college keeps parents, carers and students informed about new teaching and feedback practices being introduced to ensure they understand and can use the same language to describe learning at home. This is delivered through parent nights and the school’s mobile app.

Clancy has also implemented voluntary twilight staff meetings called “Teach Meets,” drawing on the popular model of informal teacher learning first used in the UK. One of these meetings each year has a focus on feedback for those teaching Year 12.

A key feedback strategy at Clancy is using class time to unpack the success criteria for assessment tasks. The success criteria define what students need to do to achieve a particular mark. Teachers share sample responses with students and then demonstrate the assessment and feedback practices they would use in responding to those pieces of work.

Following this, students independently assess other work samples to enhance their understanding of the success criteria and the quality of responses. They then apply the criteria to their own work to predict what feedback they will receive.

Students also apply their feedback skills and understanding of the success criteria they have developed through peer feedback. This enables them to help each other improve their work. Teachers guide peer feedback by providing information on whether students are being too harsh or generous, and on how they are applying the criteria.

To reduce the number of assessments and improve the focus on feedback, faculties collaborate where possible to develop cross-curricular tasks. This shifts student focus from content to skills, allowing for meaningful feedback to be applied across KLAs. Cross-curricular activities also give teachers a broader idea of where students are in their learning from the perspective of colleagues who teach the same students in other subjects.

“Pilot marking” is also used to ensure consistency of assessment across classes. Teachers meet to determine the success criteria for an assessment and use work samples to determine collaboratively what attainment at each grade will look like. They reconvene a few days after marking their own students’ work to confirm consistency in feedback and assessment.

ENABLING CONDITIONS

Student buy-in is secured by sharing research on the impact of feedback and maintained through providing feedback that is timely, relevant to the student and promotes improvement.

New teachers are mentored to build their capacity in feedback strategies.

Teachers share what they'll be doing in their classrooms prior to every lesson and welcome their colleagues to visit and observe.

IMPACT

- Clancy is one of five schools in the Sydney diocese to achieve greater than expected growth in 2016.
- HSC results rose from 74% of subjects above state average to 81% in 2017.
- Students with ATARs above 90 have increased across a range of subjects.
- Increased numbers of students are participating in extracurricular competitions, such as public speaking.

To support feedback practices, staff at Clancy use a number of digital technology resources. One of these is an online tool that enables teachers to develop bespoke feedback surveys for students. Their responses indicate strengths and weaknesses in learning, and inform lesson planning and whole school professional learning plans.

Teachers also give feedback using video. This serves both to keep students engaged and to enable them to revisit feedback previously provided to them to check points they may have missed or misunderstood. Feedback is also provided through online shared documents. This can be highly effective, as it requires students to acknowledge the feedback by “resolving” the comments within the system.

The college uses a variety of data, including HSC exam results, to ensure teaching is focused on the point of need. Where performance falls below or marginally above the state average, teaching is targeted to that area to improve results the following year.

Accountability is also maintained through the use of a data wall in the staff room. Images of students are displayed alongside their learning needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy. When a teacher specifically tackles those needs, they add a star against that area. This helps teachers to track their impact and student growth over time and for staff to see how these needs are being addressed across subjects.

“ When the students start to come back and say to their peers, ‘Maximise your teacher input, develop your relationships with your teachers, ask your teachers,’ you know that you’ve made an impact. ”

Iris Nastasi – Principal