

Feedback Case Study



BUILDING A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

WOONONA PUBLIC SCHOOL
WOONONA, NSW

aitsl
Australian Institute
for Teaching and
School Leadership
Limited

- ⌘ METROPOLITAN
- ⌘ GOVERNMENT
- ⌘ PRIMARY K-6
- ⌘ ICSEA 1054
- ⌘ 22 TEACHERS
- ⌘ 547 STUDENTS
- ⌘ LBOTE 6%
- ⌘ INDIGENOUS STUDENTS 4%

(Accessed from MySchool - April 2017)

Identifying a need

In 2014, Woonona Public School were looking to improve student outcomes in response to NAPLAN writing data, and to develop greater consistency in teaching and learning. To do this, they created a whole-school model of pedagogy and language of learning.

By exploring Professor John Hattie's *Visible Learning*, they learned that effective feedback had a high effect size on student outcomes. They also drew on the work of Carol Dweck, Dylan Wiliam and Shirley Clarke. This supported the school's goal of providing clarity to students about what they were learning and being assessed on.

The school's first step was to implement feedback strategies such as learning intentions and success criteria. Providing learning goals and collecting evidence of student progress opened a new way for teachers to understand their impact on student learning.

“Wiliam’s formative assessment has been a real game changer. We use it constantly throughout the school.”

Lorraine Bradwell – Principal

KEY IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES

A leadership professional learning team was established to lead the review of research and implementation of feedback. John Hattie's *Visible Learning* and Dylan Wiliam's work on formative assessment were key pieces for getting started.

School leadership secured buy-in by aligning the new strategies to the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*.

Instructional rounds provide the opportunity for staff to observe trials of new strategies.

Trials of new strategies are filmed and videos are reviewed at staff meetings so other teachers can learn and adopt successful practices.

Staff capacity built through fortnightly professional development meetings focused on feedback. Teachers use the feedback strategies, such as random selectors and entry slips, within these meetings.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. **Identified a need** for a whole-school language of learning and pedagogy to address concerns in writing achievement data.
2. **Researched** high-impact strategies for visible learning and feedback.
3. **Established** a research "executive book club" to ensure new approaches were evidence based. They also collected a variety of implementation methods for feedback strategies to suit a range of classroom contexts.
4. **Feedback strategies trialled** in classrooms by the leadership team, with other teachers observing. Teachers then modified and adopted those strategies for use in their classes.
5. **Built capacity and supported implementation** of successful strategies, and continued to improve them through cycles of research, trial, observation and evaluation in staff meetings.

Implementation narrative

The leadership team at Woonona participate in an "executive book club," chaired by the principal, to explore educational research. The group discuss new strategies and practices and, where appropriate to the context of the school, explore these further through professional learning. New practices are also mapped to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to demonstrate the relevance of embedding them in everyday teaching.

The leadership team, which includes classroom teachers, are the first to trial new practices with their students. This provides the opportunity to tweak or modify these practices to fit the school context. Other teachers observe the initial trials during instructional rounds and through video footage taken in classrooms.

The adaptation of a lesson according to a specific student need was one element of feedback that needed to be demonstrated in the initial stages of implementation. Seeing a leadership team colleague use this practice gave other teachers confidence to trial the approach in their own lessons.

Woonona teachers use pre-tests before every unit to determine students' prior knowledge. These tests are analysed at grade level meetings, and inform what will be taught throughout the unit. This ensures consistency across classes and that teaching is focused on the point of need.



KEY FEEDBACK PRACTICES

Learning intentions and success criteria

are shared at the start of each lesson. Teacher feedback is connected to this success criteria and linked to the learning in the classrooms.

Self and peer assessment enables students to review their own and each other's work using the success criteria to provide both positive and constructive comments.

Classroom techniques include:

- using pop sticks to randomly pick students to respond to questions
 - questioning to gauge where students are in relation to the learning intentions
 - students respond in a range of ways, such as verbally, using whiteboards, thumbs up / down, and red, yellow and green cups
 - exit passes at the end of a lesson for students to record something they have learnt or something that is still confusing
 - displaying WAGOLLs (What a Good One Looks Like) in the classroom for student reference
 - bump-it-up walls display example responses along a continuum of improving quality
 - asking “Why?” is an important strategy, and used to provide insight into student thinking and understanding.
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Curriculum level targets are identified as students' “Where to next?” The learning intention is common to all, but the success criteria are differentiated so students access the appropriate level of challenge and skill development. Teachers then use further assessment tasks to determine whether the growth targets have been met, and work together to ensure consistency of marking.

When a new strategy is being investigated, such as feedback, the school leadership team source a range of practical ways to implement it. Teachers are then able to select an approach that suits their classroom context. This empowers teachers to have a voice in developing practice throughout the school.

Classroom practices are discussed at grade level meetings, which take place twice each term, and at fortnightly all-staff professional development meetings. These meetings offer the opportunity to evaluate and refine classroom feedback practices. Observations and instructional rounds also support teachers in sharing of best practice.

Feedback strategies being used in classrooms include entry slips and random selectors. Entry slips are small pieces of paper, such as post-it notes, that students fill in to tell the teacher what they already know about a topic at the beginning of the lesson.

There are a number of ways to use random selectors, but a common method is to write each student's name on a pop stick, then draw these at random to choose which student to direct questions to. This ensures that every student needs to be paying attention, rather than the same students consistently responding to teacher questions.



ENABLING CONDITIONS

The leadership team use and model the strategies first so that issues are ironed out before being shared with others.

An open-door policy within classrooms enables and supports regular observations and instructional rounds.

Grade level meetings include moderation to ensure that feedback is based on consistent expectations and success criteria across the school.

Teachers mentor each other and colleagues from other schools in the region to scale up practice and to ensure consistency of approach, particularly when new teachers arrive at Woonona

The school invests heavily in sustained, focused teacher professional development.

Student voice is sought, highly valued, responded to and used to inform change in pedagogical practice

A common language of learning exists school-wide.

IMPACT

Since 2014, student NAPLAN achievement:

- in writing has risen 1 band
- in reading has risen 1.5 bands
- in numeracy has risen 2 bands.

These feedback strategies are also implemented within the staff meetings themselves, giving teachers hands-on experience with new approaches. When teachers share tactics they have been using in their classrooms, the group discusses whether it focused on a task, a process or self-regulation.

The goal is to move from task-based feedback to process-based feedback and from there into self-regulation. Concentrating on moving along this continuum ensures an ongoing focus on developing and improving feedback strategies.

Staff at Woonona Public School are now able to share their knowledge of feedback strategies by mentoring colleagues from six schools in the region. They run workshops and information sessions that can quickly upskill teachers to begin their own feedback implementation journey.



“ They know exactly where they are and where they need to go to get to the next level. Each student has a different goal or different level to get to and they own it. ”

Tristan Loosemore – Teacher