



Performance and Development for Teachers in NSW Public Schools

Feedback

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The implementation phase involves a focus on the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and leadership practice and the learning outcomes of students. Reflective practice and feedback allow adjustments and refinements to be made to the Performance and Development Plan (PDP) as the annual cycle progresses.

Feedback is defined simply as information about how we are doing in our efforts to reach a goal. It is not advice, it is not evaluative, and it is not judgemental.

Feedback Essentials

Effective feedback is:

- goal-referenced – tells teachers if they are on track or need to change course
- tangible and transparent – supported by easily understandable data/evidence
- actionable – concrete, specific, useful data within control of the teacher
- timely – facilitates reflection and reduces anxiety
- ongoing – provides opportunities for teachers to alter their practice to better achieve their goals
- consistent – information that is stable, accurate and trustworthy
- linked to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

Teaching is enhanced when teachers are provided with positive encouragement to reflect on their practice, and benefit from regular feedback and professional development throughout the year.

Regular feedback and reflection helps the teacher to adjust the plan so that it meets their professional learning needs throughout the year. It is the shared responsibility of individuals, teams, colleagues and supervisors to seek and provide positive and constructive professional feedback.

The frequency of self-reflection will be determined by the teacher and may be used to inform the development of the PDP.

Feedback can be provided through one-to-one discussions, through shared professional practice and in settings such as stage, faculty or executive meetings.

Written feedback may be provided following an observation of professional practice or participation in a collegial activity. The timing, location and format for providing feedback should be negotiated between the teacher and the supervisor, with due regard for workload and the responsibilities of all those involved.

Ongoing feedback, reflection and refinement

The PDP is a dynamic plan, open to adjustment and refinement as required in consultation with supervisors. This may include making goal adjustments or adding new strategies or support structures, or continuing with goals from one PDP to another.

Giving feedback

- Choose an appropriate time and place. Give feedback as soon as possible and practical. Make sure you and the colleague are both able to prepare for and focus on the discussion and allow enough time to avoid being rushed.
- Start by inviting the colleague to comment and encouraging them to evaluate outcomes then build on their insights. People are more willing to accept constructive feedback when they have identified their own strengths and developmental needs.
- Ask questions rather than give advice or answers. Questions can stimulate and sharpen thinking while answers tend to shift responsibility from the colleague to the person providing feedback.
- Ground feedback in observational data. Reinforce evidence of effective practice.
- Make feedback constructive – you will be helping the colleague to identify what could be improved rather than just telling them what they are not doing effectively. Always look for areas of improvement connected to their goals rather than concentrating on what went wrong. Keep critical feedback to one or two key points or the colleague may feel overwhelmed.
- Invite reflection on how the feedback was received. Listen carefully to how someone responds to feedback, noticing defensiveness, embarrassment, curiosity, and relief – people can experience a range of emotions.
- Support colleagues in determining how they would like to act on the feedback. Ask the colleague what they would like to try next and what kind of support they would like, or offer ideas if necessary. The colleague must finish the conversation feeling that they will be supported in some way to develop those skills and capacities that are not where they want them to be yet – especially when the feedback is critical.

Seeking feedback

Asking for feedback is one of the best ways to feel in control of your work, get an accurate idea of what is expected of you and judge how you can further develop.

You can ask for feedback from your supervisor or colleagues at any time:

- Let the other person know you would like feedback so that they have time to prepare.
- You can help the colleague prepare by being specific about what you would like to be the focus of your feedback. The feedback from others is entirely for your benefit and if you do not indicate what you want you are unlikely to get it.

Informal feedback

Opportunities for giving and receiving informal feedback are just as valuable and can occur at any time in a range of circumstances according to the context of the workplace. For example, a conversation between colleagues following a team teaching session could focus on aspects of the teaching which were mutually considered to be effective or on areas where there is room for further development.

This ‘in the moment’ feedback can be a useful source of self-reflection for teachers and school leaders and may also represent evidence of progress towards professional goals.

Annual review

A key feature of the formal annual feedback process will be an agreed, written assessment, recorded on the PDP template. This will show the teacher’s progress towards achieving their professional goals, based on evidence and developed through constructive dialogue.

The written feedback can be developed collaboratively by the teacher and their supervisor and should inform the development of the next PDP.

The provision of formal written feedback provides an opportunity to articulate each teacher’s achievements.

Further reading

AITSL

Engaging in performance and development:

www.aitsl.edu.au/professional-growth/support/performance-and-development-support/engaging-in-p-d

Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders:

www.aitsl.edu.au/professional-growth/australian-charter-for-the-professional-learning-of-teachers-and-school-leaders

BOSTES

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers:

www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/DownloadDocument.ashx?DocumentID=1122

DEC

Performance and Development Framework for Principals, Executives and Teachers:

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-our-reforms/pdp/pdp-framework-15116.pdf>