How can I support effective peer-feedback in my school?

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> How does professional learning support my performance and development?

> How do I evidence progress against my goals?

> Examples of evidence

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Ongoing feedback, reflection and review

Resources

> How can I initiate ongoing formal and informal feedback?

> How can I support effective peer-feedback in my school?

> How do I reflect on my own goal achievement?

> How can I make the most of my performance and development review?

> Performance and development review guide

What are the fundamentals that need to be in place for effective peer-feedback?

> Research[1] shows that adults learn best in an environment of peer learning. Peer-feedback is one of the most effective ways to both learn about yourself and support the development of others

> The following conditions provide the foundations for peer-feedback:

A commitment to performance improvement: teachers acknowledge that giving and receiving feedback is not easy, but that the most effective teachers always ask themselves what they can do better

A culture of transparency: every teacher is clear on what is expected of them. A common language exists to talk about these expectations

A culture of safety: feedback between teachers is given and received with respect. No one holds a grudge after receiving feedback

A commitment to feedback: where feedback is required, it will be freely sought and given to support each others' performance and development

> [1]Ballou, Ronald et al. 1999, *Fellowship in Lifelong Learning, an Executive Development Program for Advanced Professionals,* Journal of Management Education August 1999 4: 338-354

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How can I support the establishment of effective peer-feedback?

> The conditions for effective peer-feedback require a whole of school approach and agreement from all staff. They are not the work of one teacher alone

> You can support effective peer-feedback by thinking about what is within your sphere of influence and your sphere of control

Sphere of influence:

Your sphere of influence contains the things that you can have an impact on through influencing others. You might not have direct control over these things, but you can influence them. For example, part of your sphere of influence is to encourage and support other teachers in order to build their commitment to feedback

Sphere of control:

Your sphere of control contains the things that you have direct control over. For example:

- you can invite others to provide you with feedback

- you can offer feedback to others

- you can treat others' feedback with respect

- you can give feedback respectfully

- you can talk to your peers about your openness to continuously question and improve your own practice

How can I make peer-feedback happen?

Context

> Before you ask for or offer peer-feedback, think about your school's current performance and development culture, particularly with respect to giving and receiving feedback. This will give you some insight into how your colleagues may feel about feedback and their openness to giving and receiving feedback. This will vary from school to school and you will need to adapt your approach accordingly

> You can use the 'Getting started survey - how do I perceive performance and development at my school' to reflect on your school's current approach

How can I make peer-feedback happen?

Identifying opportunities

> Consider practical opportunities in which you could either ask for or give peer-feedback, ideally in the context of an observable event (e.g. classroom observation)

> Feedback opportunities are further explored in 'How can I initiate ongoing formal and informal feedback?'

Preparation

> To prepare to receive feedback, think about the goals you set for yourself and how peer-feedback could support you with evidence on goal progression as a stimulus for further development

> To prepare to give feedback, reflect on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and what effective teaching looks like in your school context, what you can provide feedback on and what your colleagues have asked you to provide feedback on

How can I make peer-feedback happen?

Implementation

> Engaging in peer-feedback will often require you to be courageous and initiate it. How can you do this?

- – talk about your interest to both give and receive feedback with colleagues
- – reflect on your own readiness to give feedback. What might be holding you back?
- – do not wait until you feel "fully skilled" to give feedback
- – offer feedback to others and ask for feedback from others
- – start with giving and asking for feedback on a specific aspect of teaching practice instead of trying to "pack it all in"
- – speak to your colleagues about starting a peer-feedback group to facilitate ongoing feedback at your school

Giving feedback -
How do I prepare to give constructive peer-feedback?

The facts – Think about what you have agreed to give feedback on, why this is important and the evidence your feedback is based on

1. What specific aspects of practice will you address? How do these aspects tie to the receiver's goals?
2. What evidence is your feedback based on? Focus on facts, not opinions or feelings. Include at least one observed event
3. Why do you think giving the feedback is important? Articulate the reason for the conversation and link this back to goals, evidence and the Standards – the "why"

The message – Think about the key ideas you are going to communicate and how you can effectively express them

1. Which goals and evidence will the feedback be about?
2. What are your key messages?
   Be concise, clear and constructive.
3. What suggestions for improvement and assistance do you have?
4. Step through the conversation
   "I would like to talk about..."
   "The reason I want to talk about this is..."
   "When you... the impact is..."

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Giving feedback -
How do I practically give constructive peer-feedback?

> Giving feedback is not easy. The below guidelines and considerations help you to provide feedback in a way that is supportive, easily understood and can be acted upon

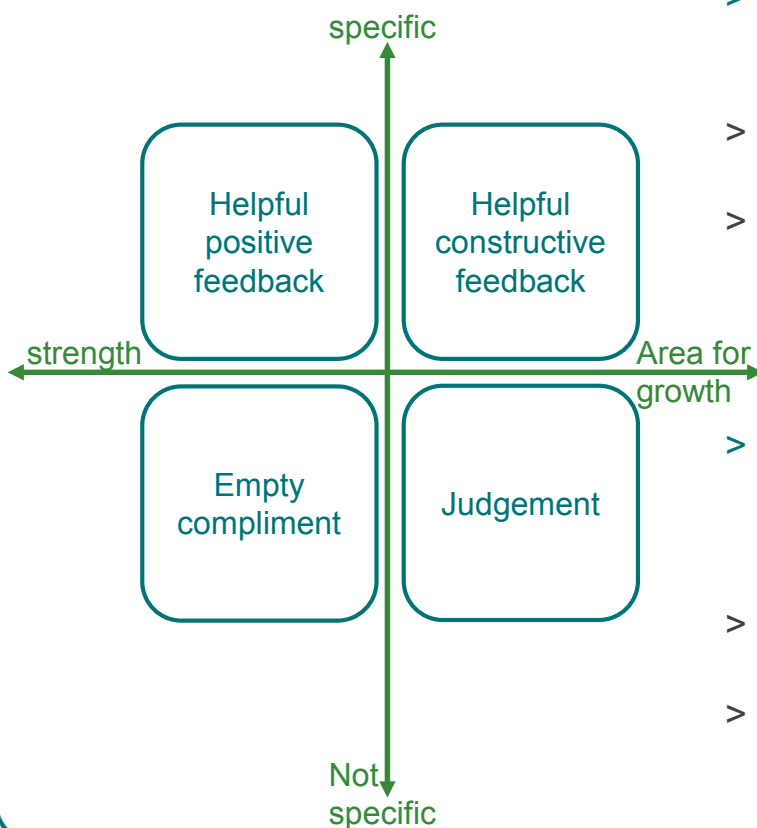| Guidelines	Considerations
The receiver should be able to understand it	> Say upfront that you are giving feedback > Be short and to the point, do not 'beat around the bush' > Use specific examples and highlight observed behaviour
The receiver should be able to accept it	> Include positive messages > Describe, but do not evaluate or judge > Ask questions that allow the receiver to respond
The receiver should be able to do something with it	> Concentrate on things that can be realistically changed > When asked, suggest solutions or alternatives > Be clear yourself what the key message of the feedback is

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Giving feedback –
What does helpful peer-feedback look like?

specific

Helpful
positive
feedback

Helpful
constructive
feedback

strength

Area for
growth

Empty
compliment

Judgement

Not
specific

> **Helpful feedback** is essentially feedback that is specific enough so that the person receiving the feedback can understand and act upon it
> Helpful feedback can comment on both areas for growth and areas of strength
> Helpful feedback is balanced so that the person can understand where they need to develop and where they can leverage existing strengths

> **Unhelpful feedback** is often simply not specific enough. The person receiving the feedback can neither understand it, because details and examples are missing, nor can they act upon it
> Unhelpful feedback on areas for growth often comes across as judgement ("You always do this...")
> Unhelpful feedback on strengths often looks like an empty compliment ("That was good")

Giving feedback - What does helpful peer-feedback look like?

The below example illustrates what **helpful feedback** looks like and what makes it helpful:

"I'd like to talk about classroom management because you mentioned this is an area you want to focus on. In your lesson this morning, I noticed that a couple of students asked you to clarify the task you gave them more than once. This meant they had less time to complete it and they also interrupted the work of other students. It's important to provide specific task instructions so that students know what's expected of them. It can also help to have these written somewhere for the students to refer to. If you like, we could go over your instructions for the next lesson together and look for opportunities to be more specific. Would that be o.k. with you?"

This example allows the recipient to take action, because the feedback describes the impact of the task instruction, suggests how a change could improve this, and offers support to make the necessary change
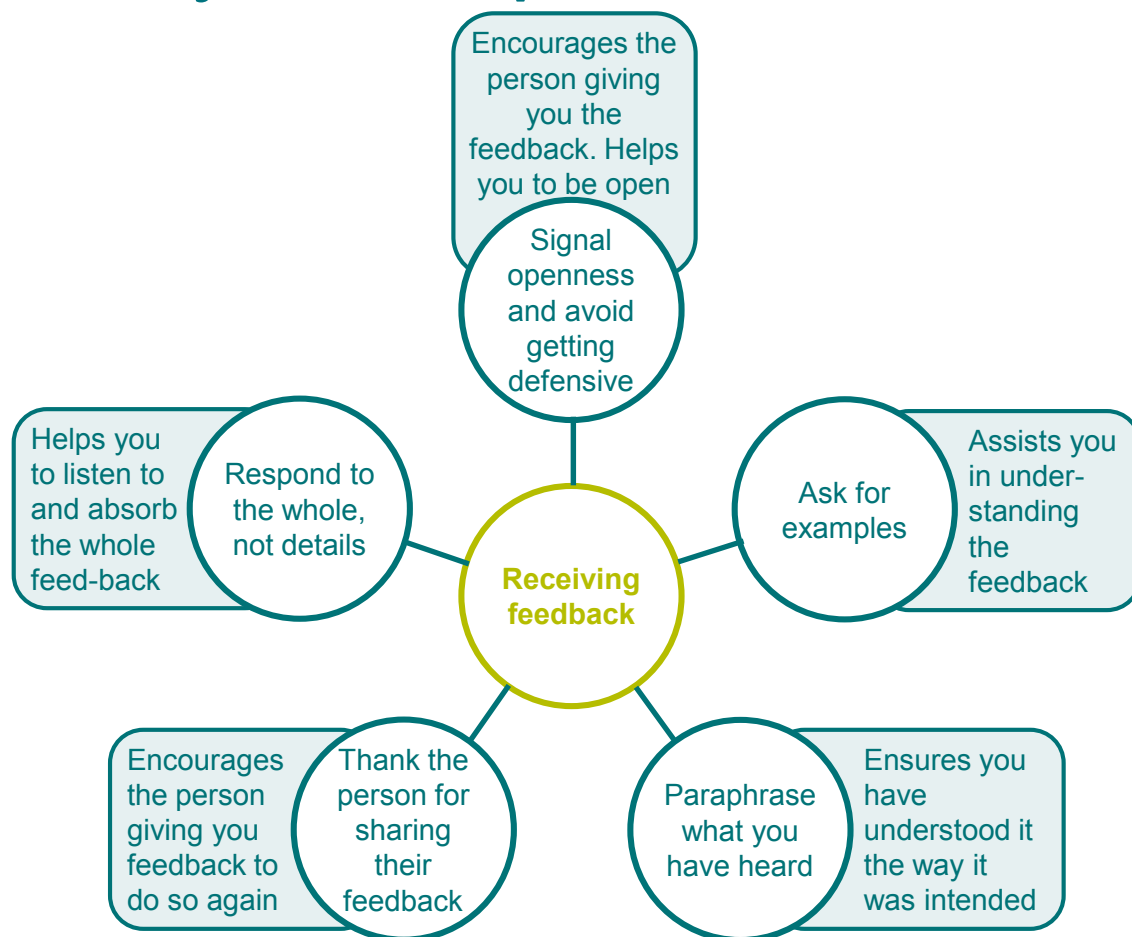
The below example illustrates what **unhelpful feedback** looks like and what makes it unhelpful:

"Look, I'd like to talk about your lessons. I mean, I know you try your best and I get how hard it is. I remember what it was like when I was trying to do something new. It's not easy... Anyway, I've heard you don't spend long on your planning so it can't be very good. I don't think your lesson planning is good enough... No, I can't think of an example right now, but you know what I mean. So maybe just give it more time, because you have to get your planning right. Okay, see what you can do."

This example is unhelpful feedback, because it is very general, has no example of an observed event, is judgemental and demoralising. The suggestion for improvement is too general

Receiving feedback -
How do I practically receive peer-feedback?

> We all intrinsically strive to do our best so receiving feedback can be challenging. Equally, giving someone an unpleasant message is not easy either, as you might be worried that you will hurt the feelings of someone you work with every day

> Remembering a few simple rules will help you to create a good climate for giving and receiving feedback

Receiving feedback

Signal openness and avoid getting defensive — Encourages the person giving you the feedback. Helps you to be open

Ask for examples — Assists you in under-standing the feedback

Paraphrase what you have heard — Ensures you have understood it the way it was intended

Thank the person for sharing their feedback — Encourages the person giving you feedback to do so again

Respond to the whole, not details — Helps you to listen to and absorb the whole feed-back

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How can I reference
feedback rules "on the go"?

> Below is a template for a pocket-sized card that allows for quick reference "on the go" both with respect to giving and receiving feedback. Print, fold and laminate the card for easy reference. Encourage your colleagues to do so too

Giving feedback
> Stick to the agreed focus on goals, evidence and Standards unless asked to comment on other aspects of practice
> Be concrete and specific, short and to the point
> Illustrate with observations and behaviours; do not evaluate or judge the person
> Give suggestions for improvement

Receiving feedback
> Signal openness and avoid being defensive
> Ask for examples to understand the feedback
> Respond to the overall message, avoid getting distracted by small details
> Paraphrase what you have heard to ensure you have understood it the way it was meant
> If appropriate, ask if they would be open to providing feedback in future