Evaluating impact
multiple measures and sources of data

Evaluation focus

Evaluating the impact of adopting a dedicated focus on feedback is crucial to ensure that your school is using its resources to best improve student learning. Importantly, the evaluation needs to focus on two levels:

1) Measuring the impact by answering the question, *Has there been an improvement in students' learning?* (Hattie, 2015)

2) Identifying the active ingredients involved in the implementation of the approach that worked in your setting and how they worked (Sharples, 2013).

When responding to the second point, it is useful to consider the support system for implementing feedback as well as the actual feedback practices introduced (Domitrovich, et al, 2008). The support system refers to how the school is supporting teachers to implement effective feedback practices through resources, coordination, alignment with school priorities and processes, monitoring of activities and professional learning opportunities. The support system aims to ensure consistency in the quality and fidelity of an introduced approach.

The Planning overview is designed to record key decisions about the support system and selected feedback practices.

Impact evaluation cycle

There are numerous processes for introducing a new approach into a school and for evaluating the impact. The Impact Evaluation Cycle is one such framework that outlines a process from identifying the need to take action through to the evaluation of the impact of the chosen approach. For more information about the Impact Evaluation Cycle visit http://evidenceforlearning.org.au/evidence-informed-educators/impact-evaluation-cycle/.

Data types

When evaluating impact, it is important to draw on both quantitative and qualitative data (Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012).

- Quantitative data measures an amount or level and is usually represented by numbers. Example measures are students' grades from tests, National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) scores (ACARA, 2017), Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) results (ACER, 2017) and attendance rates.

- Qualitative data assesses reasons, opinions and motivations and is usually represented by statements and illustrations. Example measures are observational assessments or notes and samples of student work.

Evidence of impact

Schools commonly gather a lot of data in their daily work to assess student progress and meet system compliance requirements. These will help school leaders to understand the impact of a new approach but further sources of data and evidence may also be required.

To properly assess whether a focus on feedback has had an impact, you should consider different types of data and evidence together; each type of data adding to the richness of the knowledge being created. This is sometimes called triangulation (that is, using multiple sources of data to increase confidence in the result).

As an example, to evaluate whether feedback is having a positive impact on student outcomes you could look at:

- achievement data (using individual and group level results and/or effect sizes)

- NAPLAN results (at individual and group level)

- student feedback through a survey

- teacher feedback through a survey.

AITSL has developed a Feedback evaluation questionnaire for schools to help you identify the specific ingredients that are working in your feedback approach. This data, triangulated with other school data, can help you to understand the impact of introducing or enhancing feedback practices.

Choosing multiple sources of data

Prior to implementing your focus on feedback, determine the data that you will collect and analyse to understand impact. This will help with identifying potential baseline data that you can collect, which can then be compared against data collected after introducing a focus on feedback.

The following examples will help you think about the range and type of data available to support your evaluation of impact. The list is not exhaustive - you should define evaluation questions and use data sources that are relevant for your context. Record your decisions in the Planning overview.

Note: assessment programs identified in the table below may not be available in all states and territories.

What are we trying to measure?	Example data sources	The data might tell you…
Teacher knowledge of effective feedback practices	AITSL evaluation survey	…whether teacher knowledge and understanding of the identified feedback strategies have improved
	Professional learning feedback (survey)	…about the perceived quality of professional learning provided
Teaching skills	Observation (records)	…whether feedback strategies are being implemented as agreed
	Teacher planning documents	…the level of influence that feedback information is having on planning cycles
Quality of implementation	National School Improvement Tool	…whether the feedback strategies implemented are having the desired impact (high-level)
	AITSL evaluation survey	…whether teachers have implemented the agreed feedback practices
	Observation (records)	…whether strategies are being implemented consistently across classes
	Attendance data	…if attendance has increased in classes implementing feedback strategies
	Attitudes to school survey	…whether students have maintained or improved engagement with the introduction of new feedback strategies
Student growth due to feedback	Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading and Mathematics	…whether targeted students have improved above usual or average growth in reading and/or maths outcomes
	Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS)	…whether the students who have been involved in feedback practices are less likely to require additional support
	AITSL evaluation survey	…if there are changes in student behaviours as a result of enhanced feedback practices.
Student achievement	NAPLAN	…if literacy and numeracy achievement targets are being met and if there have been any changes in achievement data when compared to data from prior to the feedback implementation
	Year 12 achievement data	…if feedback is having the desired long term impact

For more ideas on available data sources to evaluate impact, contact your relevant state or territory curriculum and assessment authority or see their website.

References

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