Feedback Case Study

WORKSHOP LESSON STRUCTURE AND FEEDBACK

WOORI YALLOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL
WOORI YALLOCK, VIC

aitsl
Australian Institute
for Teaching and
School Leadership
Limited

- PROVINCIAL
- GOVERNMENT
- PRIMARY
- ICSEA 972
- 30 TEACHERS
- 235 STUDENTS
- LBOTE 2%
- INDIGENOUS STUDENTS 2%

(Accessed from MySchool - March 2017)

Identifying a need

Woori Yallock Primary School's 2010 NAPLAN results reflected a decline in student achievement data and revealed inconsistencies with in-school assessments of students. The Department conducted an extended diagnostic review, which highlighted inconsistences in assessment, time devoted to content areas and lesson structure.

The school leadership team realised that they needed to build teacher capacity to assess student performance and learning needs, as well as to identify next steps in learning. The report helped the leadership team build the case for change and get teachers on board.

> ' the workshop model is the best way for you to be able to give feedback to students consistently and equitably '
>
> Danny Hyndman – Principal

KEY IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES

Collaborative planning. Teachers get together for three hours a week to collaboratively plan the focus of their lessons in numeracy and literacy, informed by students' data and workbooks.

Evidence-based study groups meet every three to four weeks. Teachers read a chapter of a book, discuss it together, commit to trialling specific strategies in class and later reconvene to reflect on and improve their practices.

A consultant provides professional learning (PL) support, including running whole staff PL days.

Benchmarking was introduced to help teachers better track student performance and progress in reading, and to address individual student learning needs.

A workshop lesson structure with mini lessons, individual and/or small group practice and a recap opened up opportunities for providing feedback.

Videos of teaching practice introduced, initially as a self-reflection tool. Later on, the curriculum coordinator compiled videos of best practice to share during staff meetings.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

1. **Identified a need** to help teachers assess student achievement and progress more accurately and identify their next steps in learning.

2. **Introduced benchmarking and growth** targets to support teachers in using data for planning and feedback.

3. **Engaged a consultant** to introduce conferencing and facilitate whole staff professional learning

4. **Built capacity and supported implementation** through grade levels meetings, study groups, video reflections and professional learning sessions.

Implementation narrative

The school leadership team introduced professional learning structures to support teachers in addressing the key feedback questions: Where am I going? How am I going? Where to next?

School leaders placed a strong emphasis on evidence-based teaching practices and introduced an initial school-wide focus on reading, given that this was consistently the poorest performing area in the dataset.

The school also established a study group, led by the principal, with teachers reading and discussing chapters of *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension for understanding and engagement* by Harvey and Goudvis. Each teacher was required to trial a strategy from the text in their classrooms. They would then reconvene, discuss the strategies and adjust their teaching as required.

In subsequent years, the focus of the study groups expanded to include other areas of the curriculum, such as writing and problem solving in maths.

The school introduced benchmarks for reading and equipped teachers to collect data on student performance during the course of the first year. This gave teachers a much clearer picture of their students' current reading level, which supported targeted planning and feedback. The teachers experienced early success with this approach. This paved the way for school leadership to introduce learning intentions and success criteria, as well as a workshop lesson structure into the classroom.

KEY FEEDBACK PRACTICES

Learning intentions and success criteria are developed by teachers and shared with students at the beginning of each lesson.

All students have individual goals on which they receive feedback. Academic, behavioural and social goals are displayed on the data walls. Whenever students achieve their goals, their achievement is marked and celebrated. Students track their progress in a goal book.

Conferencing is when teachers have a two – five minute conversation with students providing feedback based on their goals and evidence of achievement. A conferencing calendar allows for more time with students who require extra support.

Pre and post unit tests and 'cold writing' tasks are used to gather data on student knowledge and current understanding to inform further planning.

By clarifying learning intentions and success criteria, students knew what they would be learning and how to identify when they were successful. The workshop lesson structure began with a mini-lesson involving teacher instruction, followed by independent or small group practice guided by the teacher and, finally, a recap. The practice allowed teachers time to assess student progress and to provide feedback to guide their learning. During the recap, the class revisited learning intentions and success criteria, providing an opportunity to gauge student progress.

The school engaged a consultant from the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership to support teacher professional learning, including the introduction of conferencing in 2013. One-on-one conferencing with students provided scheduled time for targeted and specific feedback focused on individual learning goals. As teachers identified time as a barrier for conferencing, the leadership team advised staff to allocate two to five minutes per student.

Student goals are visible on data walls in the classrooms allowing teachers and students to regularly reference them and to celebrate when students progress in their learning.

In 2013, the leadership team put in place another structure to support teachers to reflect on their teaching and enhance effective and evidence-based practices. Teachers were required to video their classroom practice once per year. The curriculum coordinator would then take 30 seconds of effective teaching from each teacher and produce a compilation that was viewed and discussed at staff meetings. In addition to sharing effective practice, this allowed staff to develop a shared view of effective teaching at Woori Yallock Primary School

ENABLING CONDITIONS

Collaborative work is undertaken in professional learning sessions to develop questions, indicators and quality criteria to measure students understanding against the standards.

A safe learning environment for teachers to trial new pedagogies and implement new feedback strategies.

Aspirational learning goals are set for each student at the beginning of every year. All students are expected to make a minimum of 12 months' growth each year.

Engaged and visible leadership that provides instructional guidance and support.

Student-centred approach that prioritises students' growth and progress.

Establishing a success culture by celebrating achievements of students and teachers explaining what success looks like and sharing students' progress on data walls across the school.

Open plan classrooms allow teachers to work together and co-teach different groups of students across year levels.

External expertise has been helpful in setting the focus and introducing conferencing.

IMPACT

- 2015 NAPLAN results put Woori Yallock Primary School in the top 59 schools in Victoria and in the top 300 in the country for learning growth with a specific focus on numeracy.

- The school has experienced five years of student learning growth above the state average.

- In 2016 the school was nominated for 'outstanding school advancement' in the Victorian Educational Excellence Awards

- Less time is now spent on behavioural issues and more time is invested in providing specific and targeted feedback to students.

The timetable is planned so that teachers have three hours a week to work collaboratively within their grade levels to review student data and progress, and plan their team teaching lessons in numeracy and literacy. 'Cold writing' tasks provide further data for planning, while fluid grouping is used to support students in receiving instruction and guidance appropriate to their learning needs.

To further motivate teachers to work with student data, they were required to set aspirational learning goals for all of their students at the beginning of each year. This involved teachers reviewing the data of each student moving into their class to understand their next steps in learning. The aspirational focus of these goals reinforced the school-wide belief that all students can learn and make progress.

The implementation process rolled out over six years and is ongoing. The school took small and steady steps to incorporate effective feedback practices addressing the three feedback questions. The team celebrated and shared success stories across the school to encourage teachers to get on board.

As they continue their focus on student growth, the school leadership team plans to revisit and enhance conferencing techniques, broaden the use of videoing for reviewing and sharing practice, further embed feedback techniques into the lesson structure, and build an archive of exemplar lessons.

'…we want them to become independent learners. '
Oliver Thockloth, Principal Assistant