

The language of feedback

Empowering learner autonomy

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Session objectives:

Together, we shall think critically about:

- the language of feedback used in the classroom
- strategies to imbibe the language of feedback in the teaching and learning process
- the role of feedback in Assessment for Learning (AfL)

What comes to your mind when you see/hear the word...

LANGUAGE?

7-38-55 RULE OF COMMUNICATION



7%
SPOKEN
WORDS



38%
VOICE
TONE



55%
BODY
LANGUAGE

How would you describe the word...

FEEDBACK?



Context is everything!

Cambridge works with schools worldwide to build an education that shapes knowledge, understanding and skills.

Together, we give learners the confidence they need to thrive and make a positive impact in a changing world.



Think:

- Who is your learner?
- What opportunities are you devising to promote lifelong learning in your classroom?
- How are you developing open-mindedness through the classroom talk?
- Why is it essential to address individual learning needs and styles of our learners?

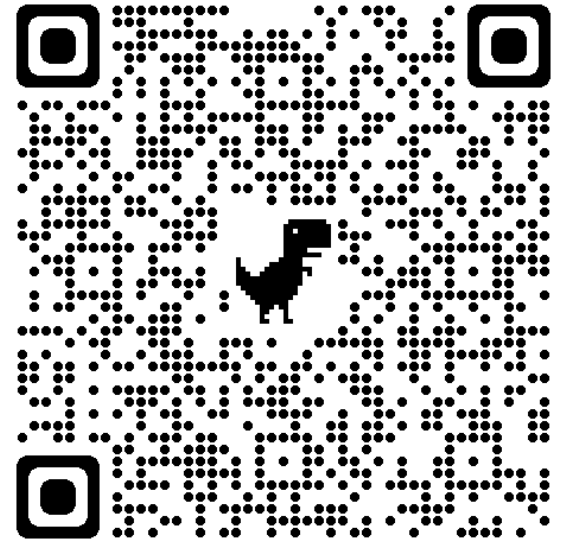


Think further...

Marc Prensky (2001) in **Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants** says:

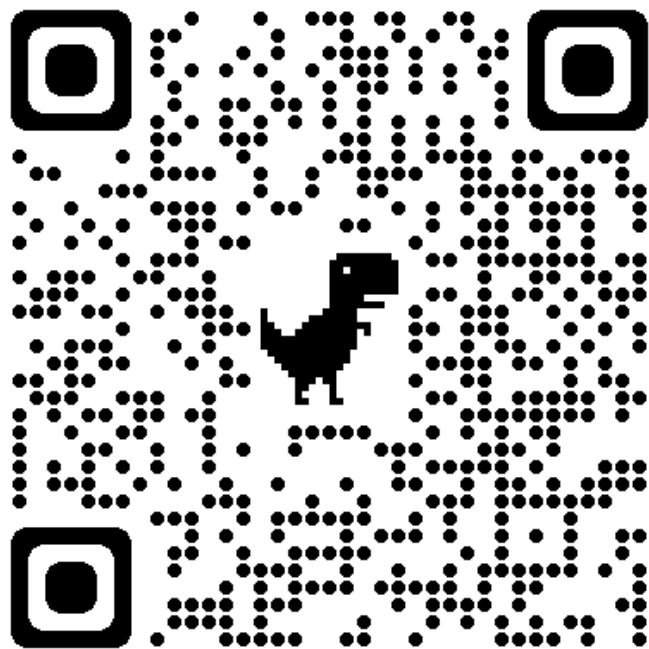
‘Our students have changed radically. Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach.’

‘Today’s students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors. These differences go far further and deeper than most educators suspect or realize.’



Why are some learners not motivated to learn?

A survey for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in the United States, *“The Silent Epidemic, Perspectives of High School Dropouts”* (Bridgeland et al. 2006) pointed out that:



“most dropouts are students who could have and believe they could have succeeded in school...the general reasons they fail remain constant – a lack of connection to the school environment; a perception that school is boring; feeling unmotivated; academic challenges and the weight of the real-world events.”

Engage me or enrage me...

Marc Prensky (2001) points out the types of learners:

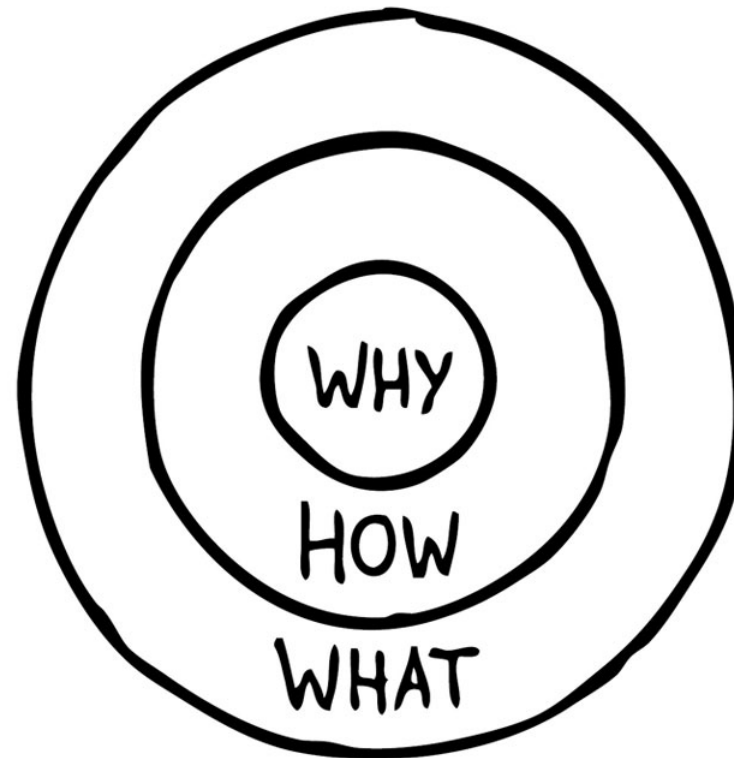
- those who are truly self-motivated
- those who are going through the motions
- those who believe that what they are being taught is of little relevance to their lives but also realise that they need their qualifications for the future
- those who increasingly “tune out” or lose interest, convinced that school is devoid of relevance to their lives.

Evolving classrooms... Evolving conversations.

Recall a typical school day.

- What interactions do you hold with your learner(s) during the day?
- Are the discussions always around academics?
- What else do you talk about?
- Can you note down three prominent topics you discussed with your learner(s) in the last week?

Feedback – a constructive tool in the classroom



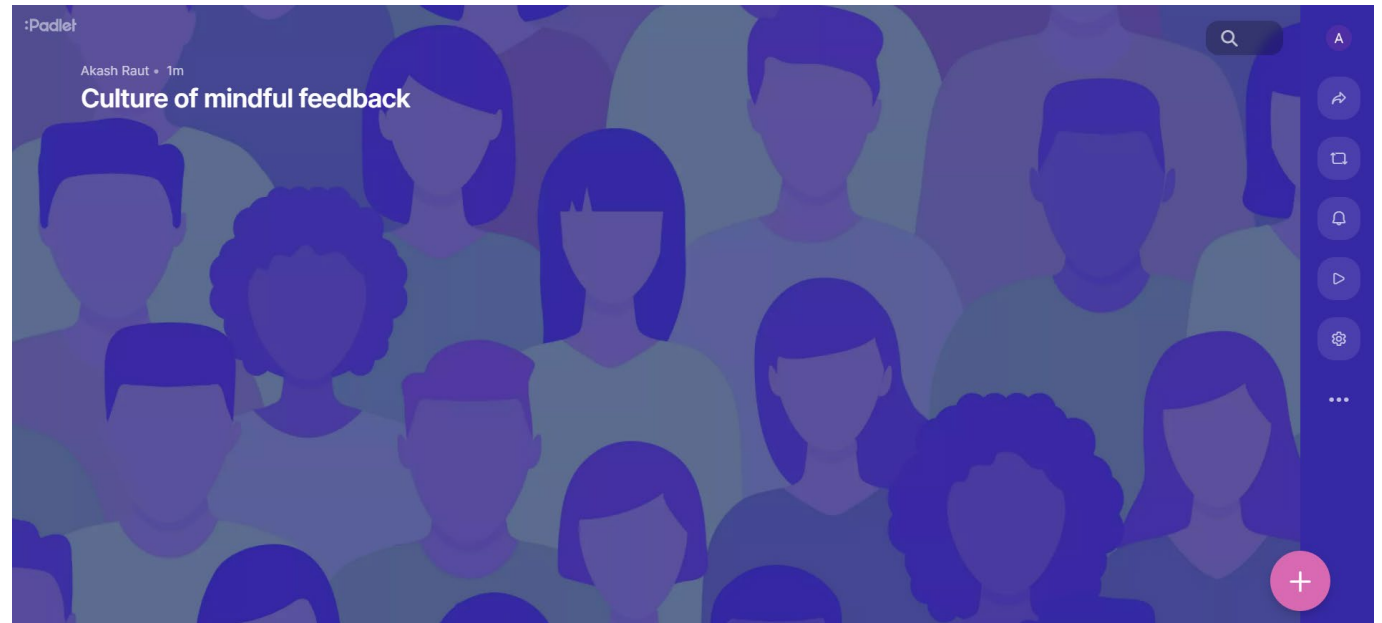
Culture of mindful feedback

Could you suggest at least one strategy to foster the culture of mindful feedback in your classroom/your school?

What kind of **language** will the adults and learners use while providing feedback to each other?

Be as specific as you can in the response you share.

Padlet QR code:



In a nutshell:

The language of feedback in the everyday classroom situation plays a significant role.

It can be fostered by:

- Promoting interactions and relationships with learners/amongst learners that are based on mutual respect, care, empathy and trust.
- Avoiding negative/prejudiced/biased emotions in interactions with learners.
- Being sensitive to their individual needs, culture and beliefs can foster a culture of feedback.
- Promoting learner motivation through feelings of competence, autonomy and belonging.

The Cambridge Attributes

- **confident** in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others
- **responsible** for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others
- **reflective** and developing their ability to learn
- **innovative** and equipped for new and future challenges
- **engaged** intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference...



Could you draw some correlation between the Cambridge Attributes and feedback as a tool to learn? How can these attributes build a strong and positive language of feedback in school? Some responses:

1. Confident Learners:

1. A strong feedback language instils confidence by emphasizing students' strengths and achievements while providing constructive guidance for improvement.
2. Encouraging students to take risks and learn from mistakes fosters a growth mindset, where feedback is seen as an opportunity for growth rather than a critique.

2. Responsible Learners:

1. Responsibility in the feedback process involves both giving and receiving feedback thoughtfully and respectfully.
2. Students learn to provide feedback that is constructive and considerate of others' feelings, promoting a positive and supportive feedback culture.
3. Taking responsibility for one's learning journey includes actively seeking feedback, reflecting on it, and using it to set goals and make progress.

3. Reflective Learners:

1. Reflection is essential in developing a strong feedback language. Students learn to reflect on their own work and progress, as well as the feedback received from others.
2. By encouraging students to reflect on the feedback they provide and receive, educators help them understand its significance and how it can inform their learning.
3. Reflective learners develop the ability to articulate their thoughts and ideas effectively, enhancing their communication skills in giving and receiving feedback.

4. Innovative Learners:

1. Innovation thrives in an environment where feedback is valued and encouraged.
2. Students are empowered to think creatively and explore new approaches based on the feedback they receive, leading to innovative solutions and insights.
3. Feedback that promotes innovation focuses on fostering a growth mindset, encouraging experimentation, and celebrating diverse perspectives and ideas.

5. Engaged Learners:

1. Engagement is key to fostering a positive feedback culture in school.
2. When students are engaged in their learning and invested in their progress, they are more receptive to feedback and actively seek opportunities for improvement.
3. Feedback that is meaningful, relevant, and timely keeps students engaged and motivated, driving continuous growth and learning.

Further reading...



Education brief: Behaviour for learning

Behaviour for learning is an approach to understanding and developing children and young people's behaviour that focuses on their relationship with their self, with others and with the curriculum, and promotes readiness for education.

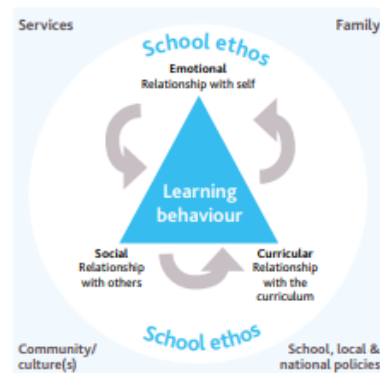
What is behaviour for learning?

Behaviour for learning is an approach developed by Dr Simon Ellis and Professor Janet Tod.

It is based on a conceptual framework that emerged from a systematic review (Powell and Tod 2004) commissioned by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) in the UK and conducted by a research team at Canterbury Christ Church University.

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) sets out three relationships for learning: *relationship with self*, *relationship with others* and *relationship with the curriculum*. These three relationships represent respectively the emotional, social and cognitive/curricular factors that influence the development of learning behaviour.

Figure 1: The behaviour for learning conceptual framework (based on Ellis and Tod 2018)



The arrows connecting the three relationships are a reminder that these relationships are not experienced in isolation by the learner. For example, a difficulty in forming friendships (social) may adversely affect how an individual feels about

themselves (emotional). Similarly, a poor relationship with a subject teacher (social) may impact negatively on the learners' relationship with that curriculum area. More positively, improvements in one relationship area have the potential to impact positively on another.

The circle surrounding the central triangle reflects the influence of the school ethos on the three relationships and learners' behaviour. A range of other external influences are also acknowledged.

The behaviour for learning approach can be used flexibly:

- School leaders can use its principles to support the development of an inclusive whole-school behaviour policy.
- Classroom teachers can use it as a consistent reference point when selecting and subsequently evaluating behaviour management strategies.
- Pastoral, counselling and special educational needs staff may find the approach useful in informing decisions about support and intervention required by groups or individuals.

What is learning behaviour?

The term 'behaviour for learning' reflects the key principle that the priority of a teacher¹ is to promote learning. Therefore, even when selecting a behaviour management strategy, consideration should be given to its contribution to the development of learning behaviour.

The Evidence for Policy & Practice Information (EPPi) review (Powell and Tod 2004) identified a set of learning behaviours drawn from the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) professional standards (DFES/TTA 2002) in place at the time. These were:

- engagement
- independent activity
- collaboration
- responsiveness
- participation
- self-regard
- communication
- self-esteem
- motivation
- responsibility.

¹ The term 'teacher' is used throughout for brevity but should be interpreted as referring to any practitioner working with children and young people in an educative capacity

Further reading...



Encouraging student voice

Student voice is the active engagement of young people in their education via opportunities for them to share perspectives about their learning. Encouraging student voice helps to promote autonomy and engagement by making sure students are fully engaged in the learning process.

There are many ways we can develop student voice in an online setting.

Encourage communication in the online space you are using

You are the role model here, so you should demonstrate the type of interactions that you want to encourage. Where possible address students by name and provide them with appropriate opportunities to contact you. Contact with your students may take a whole range of formats but should always be welcoming and encouraging of their thoughts and questions. Establishing effective ways for students to share is key to encouraging student voice online.

Recognise the challenges that your students may be facing

Not all your students will have the same experience or expertise related to online learning. Create opportunities for students to share what they do and do not understand about their current situations by asking open-ended questions such

as 'How are you feeling about learning biology away from school?' Asking open-ended questions like this avoids any assumptions on your part and allows you to gain valuable feedback. Their responses should help you to gauge the work you are setting and how they are engaging with it.

Be responsive to your students

Do not be afraid to encourage your students to give you feedback on your online teaching. Show that their contributions are valued by making relevant adjustments to how you are teaching and explaining how their feedback informed the changes. Doing this helps students to feel that they have the opportunity to shape their learning environment. Seeing the impact of suggestions from students will motivate others to engage as well as encourage those who already have to continue doing so.

Support your students

In an online setting, students may feel they have fewer opportunities to interact with you and gain direct support. Make sure you provide time and space for them to ask clarifying questions related to the tasks you have set. You could arrange one-to-one follow-up chats or set up discussion groups. The creation of groups gives students the opportunity to offer peer support, and you may want to encourage them to share questions with each other before coming to you. If you monitor these group chats you can use your time effectively by responding to common questions in one place. Their questions should allow you to judge the tasks you have set and alter them if necessary.

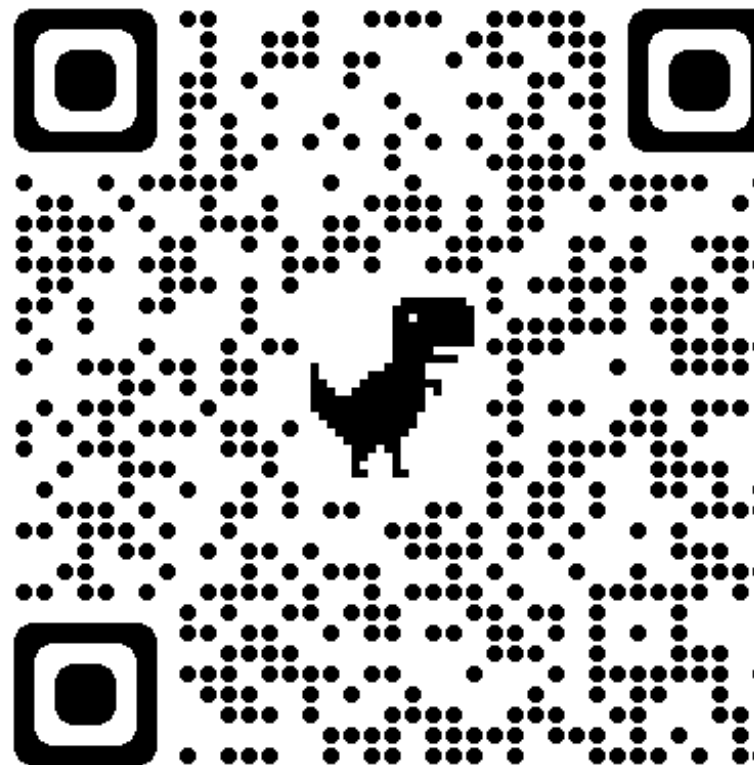
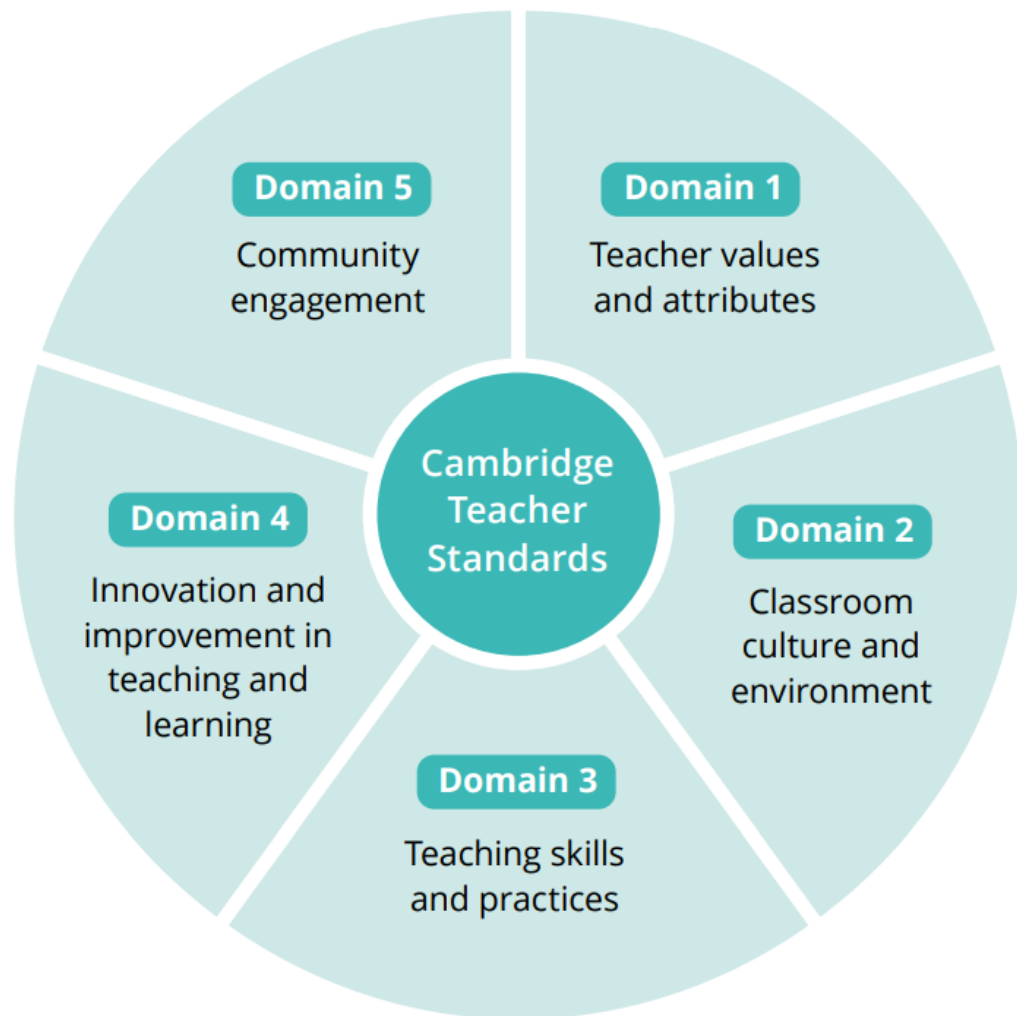


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Making connections - Strategies to implement language of feedback in teaching, learning and assessment



The Cambridge Teacher Standards



Why these two standards?

2 Classroom culture and environment

Teachers:

- Standard 1** create a classroom culture and environment where all students are supported in their learning
- Standard 2** establish positive and productive relationships with all students to support their learning and achievement
- Standard 3** have high expectations of themselves in their professional practice
- Standard 4** have high expectations of all students
- Standard 5** work effectively with colleagues to develop the curriculum and enhance student learning.

3 Teaching skills and practices

Teachers:

- Standard 1** demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how students learn and how this impacts on teaching
- Standard 2** demonstrate secure content knowledge and pedagogy to plan coherent, authentic and engaging learning programmes and lessons
- Standard 3** have a deep understanding of the diverse needs of students and adapt their practice accordingly
- Standard 4** orientate their students and ensure they are ready to learn
- Standard 5** use effective teaching strategies to motivate, challenge and extend student learning
- Standard 6** use a range of assessment strategies to inform next steps in the teaching and learning process and to provide timely, accurate and constructive feedback
- Standard 7** use summative assessment to understand student progress and attainment
- Standard 8** manage time effectively and ensure the classroom is free from disruption.

Assessment for Learning (AfL)



Assessment for learning

Assessment for learning (AFL) is an approach, integrated into teaching and learning, which creates feedback for students and teachers in order to improve learning and guide their next steps.

What does assessment for learning mean?

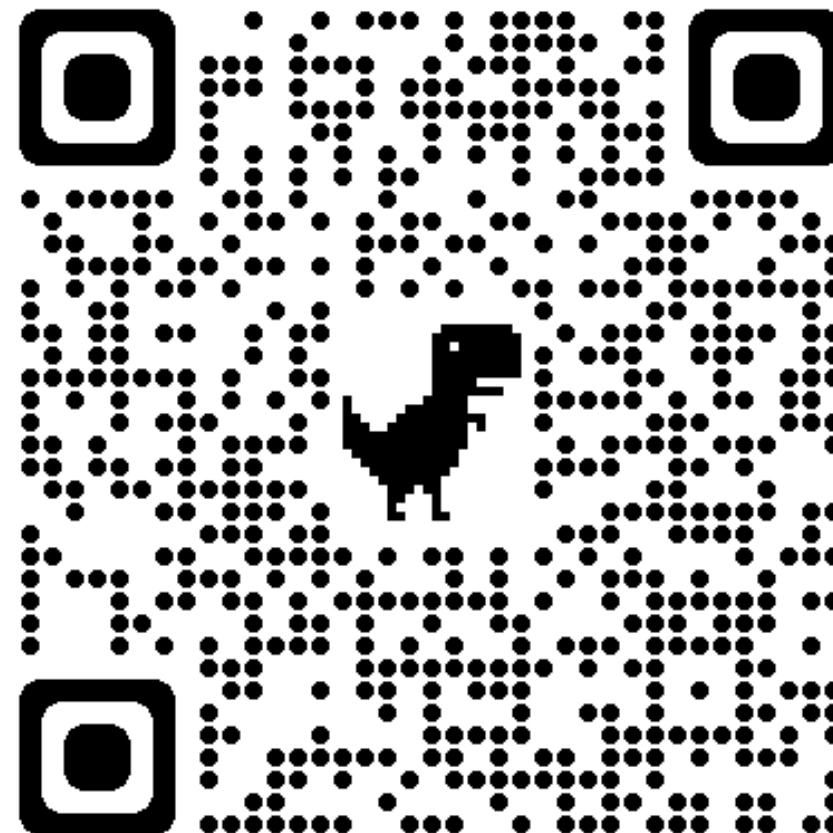
AFL focuses on both the teacher and student understanding three key things:

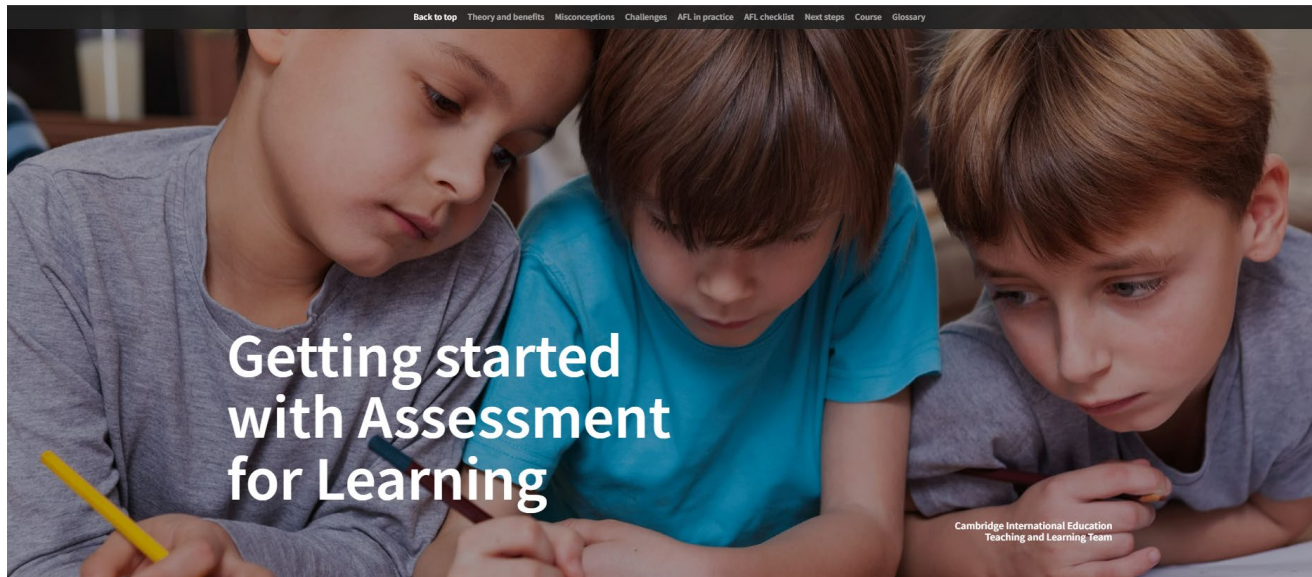
1. **Where the learner is going.** Sharing the aims of a lesson and success criteria helps learners to see what they are aiming for and what they need to do to achieve those aims.
2. **Where the learner is now.** Techniques such as effective questioning will help teachers to gauge what individuals and groups have learnt during a lesson, generating evidence of learning that both teacher and students can make use of.
3. **How can the learner get there?** Teachers use this evidence of learning to inform choices about what they will do next with a class or individual students. Learners can use this evidence to make decisions about their learning, such as how to spend their independent study time.



AFL is concerned with maximising the feedback process (teacher to student and student to teacher) to optimise student learning. Feedback ranges from the **informal** (e.g. oral comments given immediately to learners as they think through problems), to more **formal** (e.g. written feedback given after an end-of-topic test). AFL also involves high-quality **peer and self-assessment** where learners or peers may be involved in making decisions about future learning needs (William, 2018).

The term 'assessment for learning' became popular in the 1990s. At this time there was concern that learners were being over-assessed and that there was a disproportionate focus on end results (assessment of learning) rather than on assessment processes that could actively enable learners to make progress. Both assessment for learning and assessment of learning are valuable in education, but they have different purposes.





Language of Feedback

Teaching, Learning, Assessment

Case study 1 – Grade 6:

In a writing class, the teacher gives students a performance task of writing a newspaper report. The work is done when it is ‘up to professional writing standards’ for the sample newspaper report. The students receive a description of the standard in writing with a model response. But the main information is the last part.

“When you think your writing is up to standard, put it on this table, and sign it with your favourite colour pen – signifying it is up to standard.”

On the table, students will also find some newspaper reports up to standard from previous students and some that are not, marked as such.

A student thought he was ready. But upon getting to the table and closely inspecting all the sample newspaper reports on the table, he went back to his table (having realised his was not up to standard) to work further.

Case study 2 – Grade 9:

At half-time of every football game, the coach asks the players:

- *What's working for us?*
- *What's not working for us?*
- *What's working for the other team?*

Players answer the questions, and they propose the advice that follows from the feedback on what to work on in the second half.

The same questions are asked again and discussed the next day in practice in the post-mortem of the game, with the coach asking players to re-create successes and failures in walk-thru simulations.

Case study 3 – Grade 1:

In a class of 1st graders, students in pairs create a simple map of the whole school, with concentration on a map of a room in the building. The map's success is assessed, in part, by other students' ability to use the map to find something, using the map key and compass rose. After each team has had others use their map, students self-assess using a few prompts with smiley faces or sad faces for each criterion to be circled, reflecting their self-assessment as to how helpful and clear their map was.

Reflect:

To what extent are these good examples of feedback strategies to assess teaching and learning?

What makes you say so?

Post your responses in the chat box.

Consolidate:

- Gaining mastery over the content (Knowledge, understanding and skills)
- Thinking deeper
- Precision and accuracy in the work produced
- Ability to communicate and collaborate
- Language awareness
- Developing creativity and critical thinking...

Evaluating – Direct Negative Feedback vs Indirect Negative Feedback

Russia	France	Italy	US	UK	Brazil	India	Saudi Arabia	Japan
Israel	Germany	Norway	Australia	Canada	Mexico	China	Korea	Thailand
Netherlands	Denmark	Spain		Argentina	Kenya	Ghana	Indonesia	



Direct negative feedback

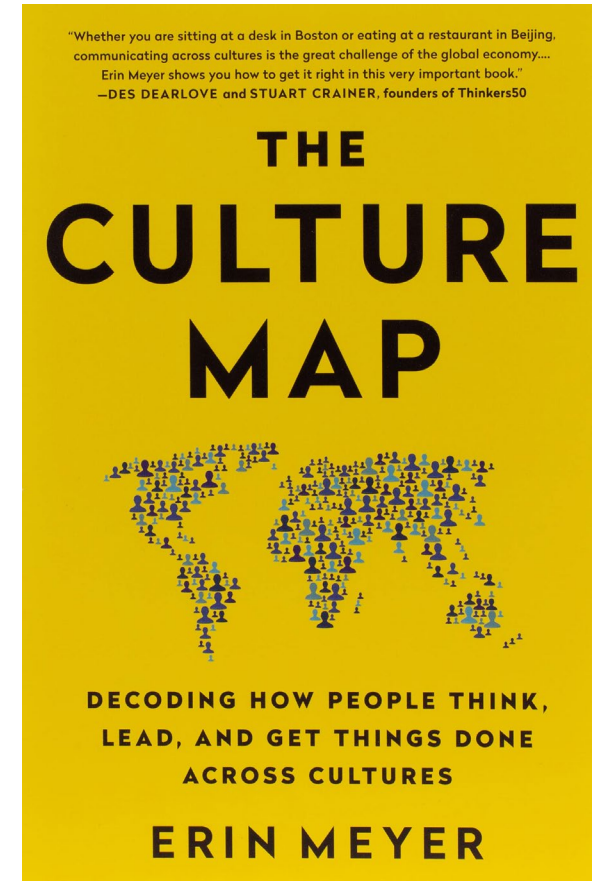
Indirect negative feedback

Direct negative feedback

Negative feedback to a colleague is provided frankly, bluntly, honestly. Negative messages stand alone, not softened by positive ones. Absolute descriptors are often used (totally inappropriate, completely unprofessional) when criticizing. Criticism may be given to an individual in front of a group.

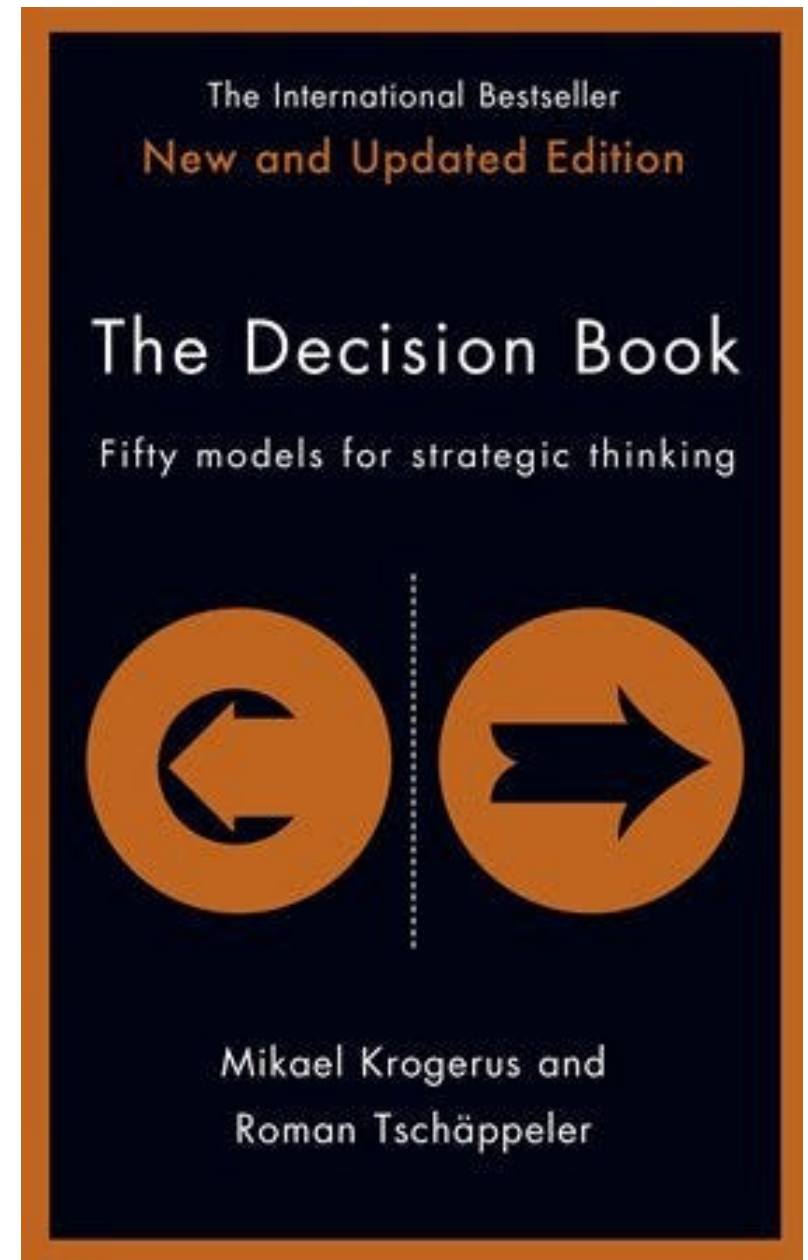
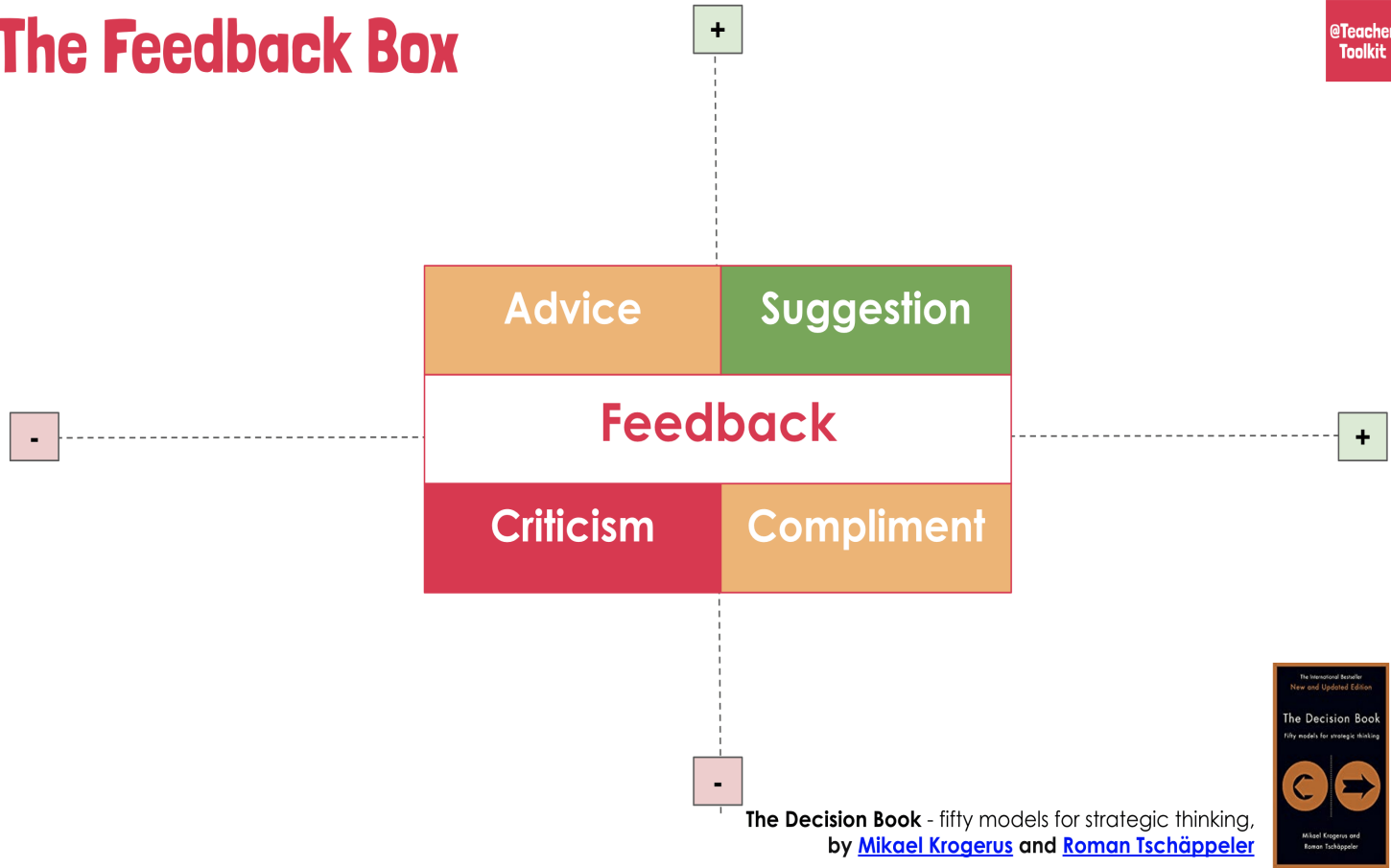
Indirect negative feedback

Negative feedback to a colleague is provided softly, subtly, diplomatically. Positive messages are used to wrap negative ones. Qualifying descriptors are often used (sort of inappropriate, slightly unprofessional) when criticizing. Criticism is given only in private.

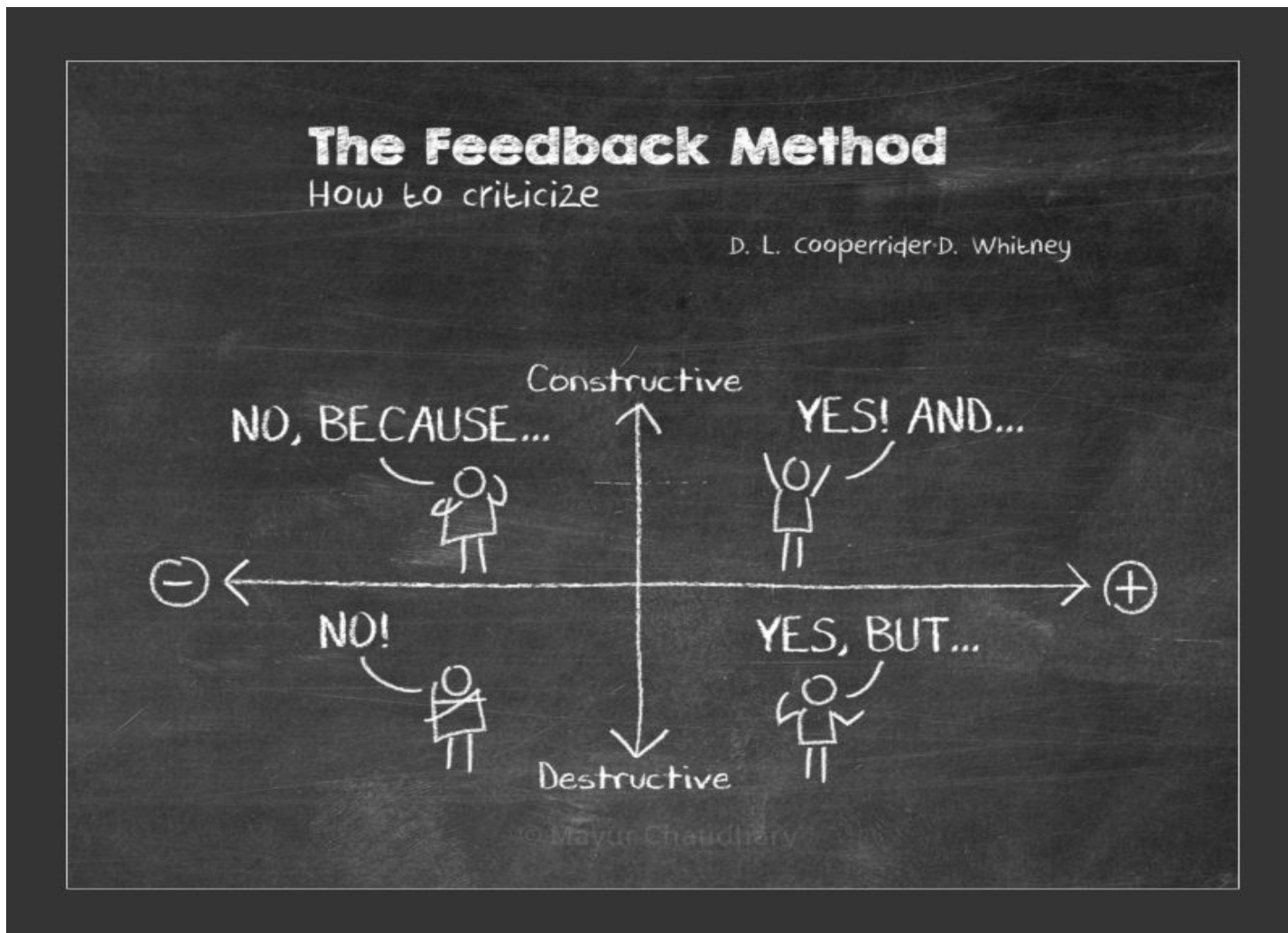


The Feedback Box

The Feedback Box



The Feedback Method



THE COMMUNICATION BOOK. 44 IDEAS FOR BETTER CONVERSATIONS EVERY DAY

**MIKAEL KROGERUS &
ROMAN TSCHAPPELER**

AUTHORS OF THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER *THE DECISION BOOK*

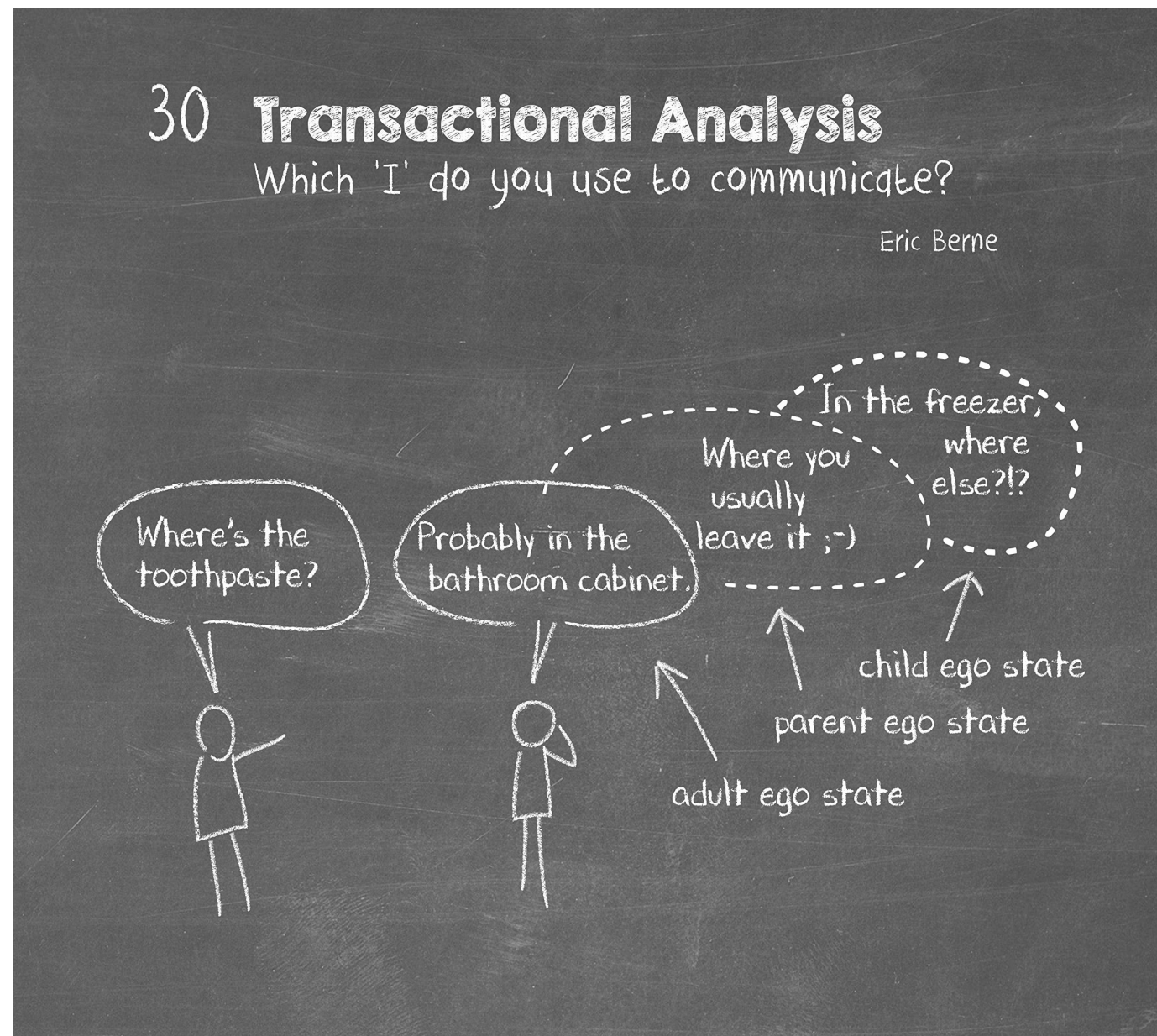
Cambridge Schools Conference, March 2024
Effective communication: from competence to confidence

Transactional Analysis

THE
COMMUNICATION
BOOK. 44 IDEAS
FOR BETTER
CONVERSATIONS
EVERY DAY

**MIKAEL KROGERUS &
ROMAN TSCHAPPELER**

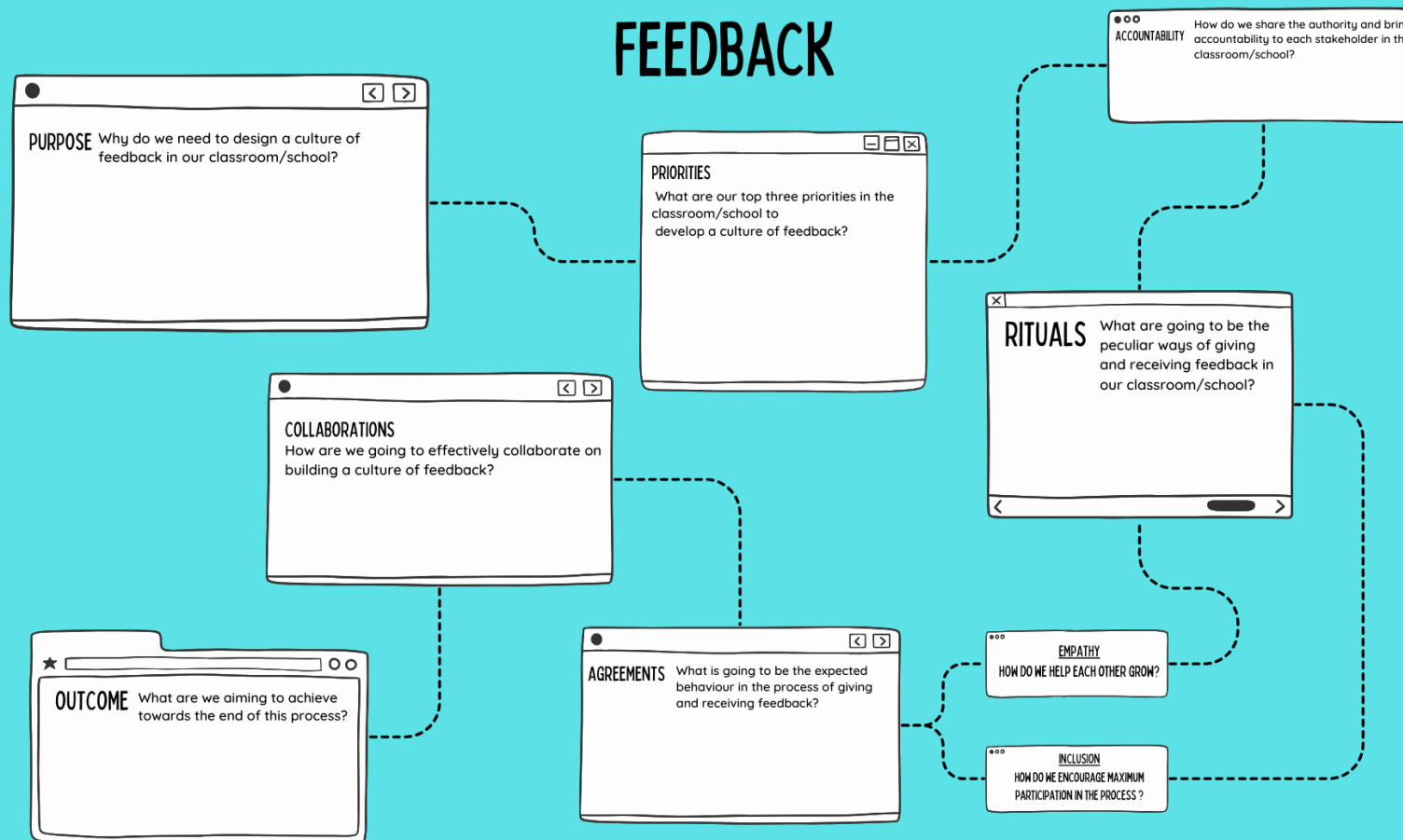
AUTHORS OF THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER *THE DECISION BOOK*



RAPPS Project



BUILDING A CULTURE OF FEEDBACK



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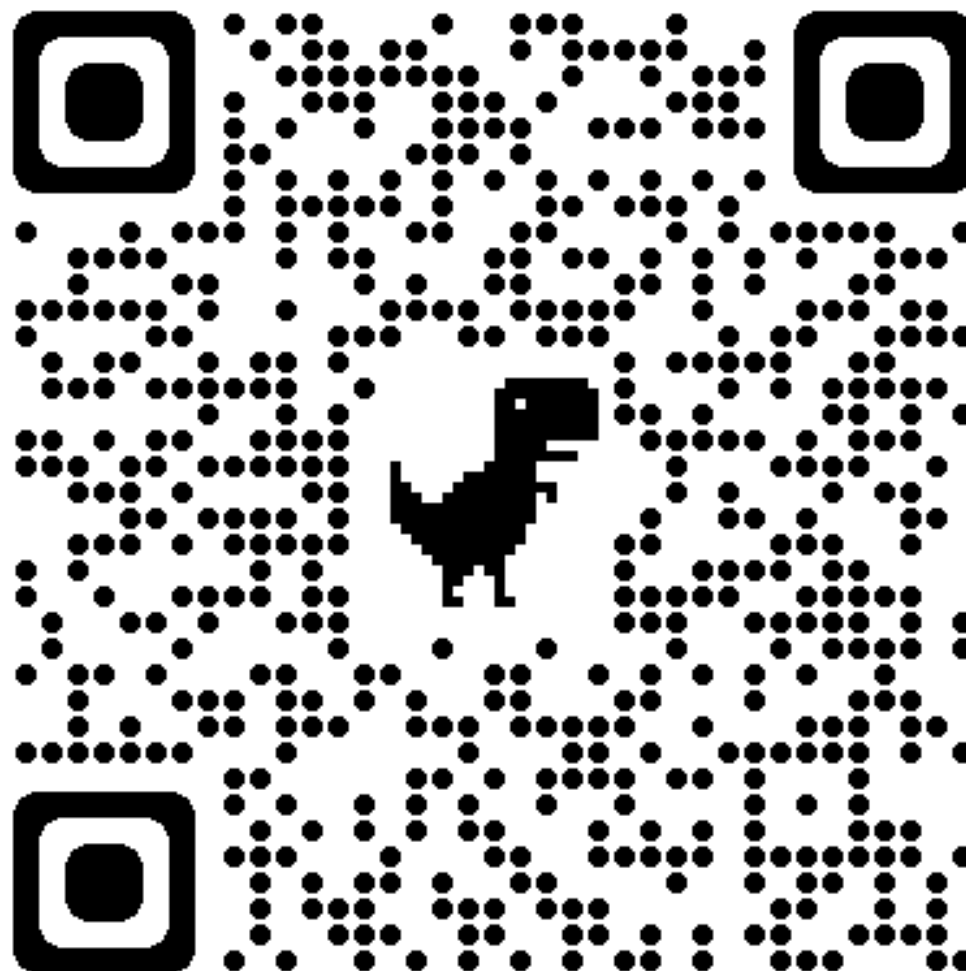
Further reading...

Review of Educational Research
March 2007, Vol. 77, No. 1, pp. 81–112
DOI: 10.3102/003465430298487

The Power of Feedback

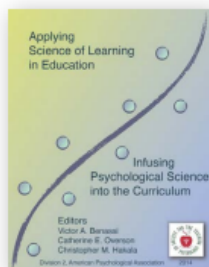
John Hattie and Helen Timperley
University of Auckland

Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement, but this impact can be either positive or negative. Its power is frequently mentioned in articles about learning and teaching, but surprisingly few recent studies have systematically investigated its meaning. This article provides a conceptual analysis of feedback and reviews the evidence related to its impact on learning and achievement. This evidence shows that although feedback is among the major influences, the type of feedback and the way it is given can be differentially effective. A model of feedback is then proposed that identifies the particular properties and circumstances that make it effective, and some typically thorny issues are discussed, including the timing of feedback and the effects of positive and negative feedback. Finally, this analysis is used to suggest ways in which feedback can be used to enhance its effectiveness in classrooms.



Further reading...

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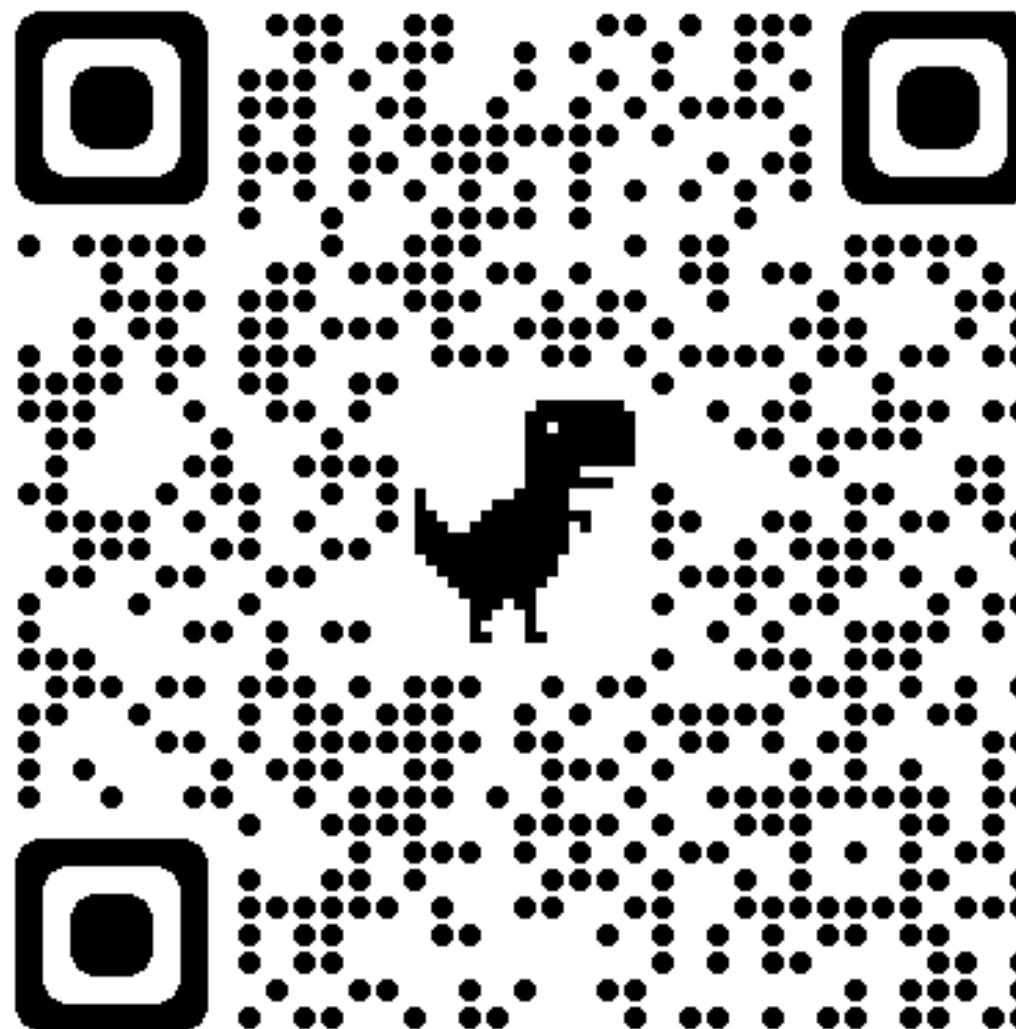
Using Feedback to Promote Learning

John A. C. Hattie
University of Melbourne
Gregory C. R. Yates
University of South Australia

The term 'feedback' emerged around the start of the 20th century. It was coined to describe mechanisms that would allow a well-engineered system to regulate itself (e.g., when a heating system exceeded a certain temperature it turned itself off, and could restart when the temperature got below a certain level). There is an inherent sense of control and automation within its original conceptualization. In reviewing the history of the social sciences, it is apparent that early behaviourists used feedback ideas extensively when attempting to analyse alterations in behavioural rates and probabilities. They conceived feedback as stemming from reinforcers (positive feedback) or in avoidance of punishment (negative feedback). The consequence of present actions would regulate changes in the rate of future action, in accord with the goal of servicing an organism's motivational requirements, be they biological or socially defined. Irrespective of such uses, the term 'feedback' began to be used widely, becoming an aspect of everyday vernacular well aside from its original derivation in engineering theory and practice.

Today, feedback has come to have many more expansive meanings. For instance, there are distinctions between feedback and feed forward, and it can refer not only to actual consequences but can also be self-rewarding (i.e., feedback may inspire further actions and be intrinsically rewarding within itself). Certainly, our responsiveness to feedback is seen as a key driver of behavioural adaptation. This notion of sensitive and adaptive responsiveness was one of the initial ideas investigated through psychological science methods, often researched and documented under the term 'knowledge of results'.

In broad perspective, it is not hard to locate convincing evidence pointing to feedback as a key process implicated in behavioural change. For instance, military gunners become more accurate and less wasteful in using ammunition when provided with detailed instruction coupled with feedback, both factors being essential (Gagne, 1962), young drivers become more careful after accidents or near accidents (Mayou, Simkin, & Threlfall, 1991), and entrepreneurs often report certain positive learning effects associated with analysing business failures (Politis & Gabriellson, 2009). Consider, as an example, the famous Hawthorne studies where workers were asked to be part of an experiment; no matter how different independent variables were manipulated, worker productivity increased. For example, when the light in the factory was reduced, rest pauses were introduced, and group payment was changed to individual payment, still the production increased. The claim, now known as the Hawthorne effect, was that because the workers knew they were part of an experiment and being observed, their performance increased. An alternative explanation for the increased output is the feedback workers received

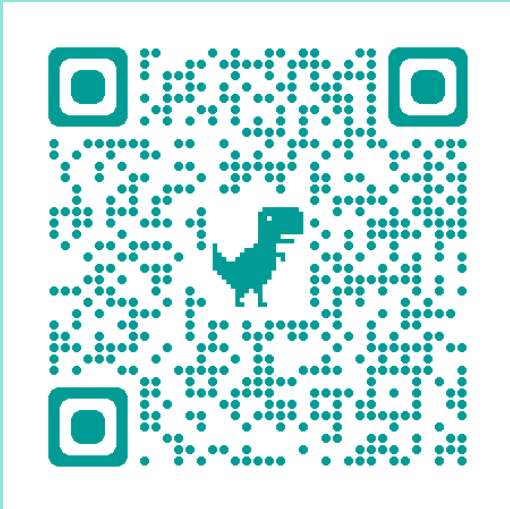




Get in touch!

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[cambridge.org/internationaleducation](https://www.cambridge.org/internationaleducation)

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Effective communication: from competence to confidence

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Thank you!

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