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Practical questions for which this card offers SUGGESTIONS

- How can I stimulate feedback seeking behaviour in my teachers and staff?
- How can I strengthen the quality of feedback processes?

(rather than giving feedback as unsolicited advice). This puts ownership on the recipient of the feedback and increases the likelihood that the received feedback will be accepted (Winstone and Carless, 2021).

What does feedback seeking mean?

A feedback process is not a one-way street but involves a dialogue, in which the participants collectively give meaning to the feedback. Good feedback processes ensure that teachers and staff get to know each other’s expertise, values, motivations, and ambitions better. In practice, this is not always easy, because this presupposes, for instance, a sufficient level of trust and psychological safety. Furthermore, teachers and staff are often not used to taking initiative in seeking feedback from colleagues. As a school leader, you can make a difference by supporting collegial feedback and demonstrating your own feedback behaviour as a role model.

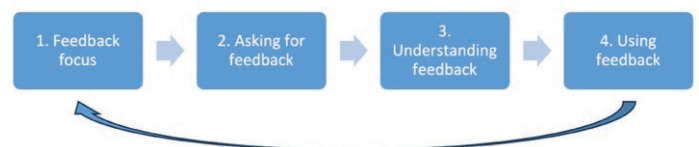


This is the fourth Headstart in the series of 8 dimensions of the Learning Organisation model.

Why are feedback processes important in a learning organisation?

Systematically collecting and using feedback contributes to all learning processes in the school and to the quality of teaching. You might first think of feedback from data on student performance, satisfaction surveys, or feedback from audits. However, it also involves direct feedback on the actions of teachers and staff. We emphasize asking for feedback as a way to learn

Four steps to support feedback seeking behaviour



1. Help finding focus for feedback

In order to learn from feedback, it is important to ask feedback that is related to professional development goals of teachers or staff members. Connecting individual development goals to school development

goals help teachers and staff to connect their own learning to organisational development. As a school leader you can raise awareness among teachers and staff about the importance of asking feedback for individual professional development and team development as a way to enhance teaching and learning quality.

How to support finding focus?

- Help colleagues to focus their feedback questions on a specific topic.
- Discuss why feedback is valuable for learning and development.
- Support by linking (team) performances to goals in school development.
- Demonstrate your commitment to professional development.

2. Support asking for feedback

Although it might seem easy to ask for feedback, it is not. Teachers and staff need to see value in asking for feedback, but also need courage to explicitly ask for feedback regarding their own teaching behaviour. Asking for feedback makes you vulnerable for other colleagues' opinions. Asking a focussed feedback question that matches your own development goals helps. Also, a clear and transparent feedback process helps overcoming the invisible threshold for asking feedback.

How to support asking for feedback?

- Discuss which team member has relevant expertise, so colleagues know who to ask for feedback on a specific matter.
- Discuss how the process of giving each other feedback is going to happen.
- Support by providing time and space for asking for feedback.
- Coach colleagues to formulate feedback questions with a sharp focus.
- Show that you also ask for feedback from individuals with different expertise.
- Appreciate colleagues who ask for feedback

3. Support understanding feedback

A feedback process is not a one-way street. In order to give meaning to a feedback question and also to make sense of the feedback received, a dialogue is needed between the receiver and the provider of the feedback. Such a dialogue is pivotal to learn from feedback, but it needs an open attitude and a climate of trust and also special communication skills.

How to support the understanding of feedback?

- Discuss how teachers and staff can conduct open and respectful feedback conversations.
- Discuss how they can deal with emotions that may arise.
- Provide support by collectively reflecting on feedback processes and coaching colleagues.
- Demonstrate how you promote a safe climate and discuss this with team members, showing that you value feedback conversations.

4. Support using feedback

Once the feedback has been received, accepted and given meaning it is important to find the right steps to put the feedback into practice. A step needs to be helpful to reach a certain professional goal, but cannot be too ambitious, it needs to be within reach. Also, it is important to pay attention to the evaluation of this next step. This might lead to an adaptation of the feedback focus (step 1).

How to support making use of feedback?

- Discuss with teachers and staff how feedback has helped their professional development.
- Evaluate how the process might be improved.
- Provide support by coaching team members while implementing steps to improve the feedback process and provide space and time to practice.
- Show how you have personally learned from feedback and demonstrate how feedback has contributed to team performance.

Role model behaviour

School leaders often do not realise how much influence their own role model behaviour has on teachers' social behaviour. As a school leader you can express this role model behaviour by regularly asking feedback from teachers and staff, showing interest in their opinions and thanking them for their openness. With this behaviour you demonstrate that you also learn from other perspectives and have an open mind. This will promote a positive learning climate.

Winstone, N. E., & Carless, D. (2021). Who is feedback for?

The influence of accountability and quality assurance agendas on the enactment of feedback processes. Assessment in education: principles, policy & practice, 28(3), 261–278.

