



Feedback & Feedforward Strategies

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What is good feedback?

Feedback is probably the best-tested principle in psychology...most effective when it is timely, perceived as relevant, meaningful and encouraging, and offers suggestions for improvement that are within a student's grasp (Brown, Bull & Pendlebury, 1997).

Feedback is a response to student work including assessment tasks, presentations, products and performances. Too often however, feedback is given by teachers and not acted upon by students. This leads to feedback have little or no impact on the student's learning.

Good feedback is intended to acknowledge the progress students have made toward achieving identified learning goals. It can be given by a teacher, external assessor, a peer, a parent, by the student themselves or any combination of the above. Providing students with a mark or grade only is rarely helpful, even if accompanied with a brief comment. Good feedback is focused and students should have an opportunity to act on the feedback (Hillcocks 1986).

...it is the closing of the gap between where the student is and where they are aiming for that leads to the power of feedback (Hattie, 2009)

The goal of feedback should be to encourage deep understanding. The feedback should involve 'detailed comments on ideas, evidence and techniques. The goal is understanding and feedback should reflect it' (Brown and Knight, 1994).

Good feedback at Surf Coast Secondary College should be:

- given from teacher to student and student to teacher.
- based on a specific task or learning goal.
- given in a timely manner.
- based on an understanding of where the student is currently working.
- built on changes from previous practice and trial tasks.
- simple for students to understand and act upon.

What is good feedforward?

...by using feedforward...leaders can dramatically improve the quality of communication in their organisations...the result is a much more dynamic, much more open organisation where people focus on the promise of the future rather than the mistakes of the past...(Goldsmith, M 2009).

One of the fundamental problems with all types of feedback is that it focuses on the past or what has already happened. As such, feedback can be limited and static.

Good feedforward should open up to students the infinite variety of opportunities that can happen in the future of their learning. Good feedforward should be expansive and dynamic. It should suggest what can be done next and is especially helpful when received during the progress of the work so that adjustments can be made in an ongoing manner.

The major questions are 'Where am I going?', 'How am I going?' and 'Where to next?'. An ideal learning environment or experience is when both teachers and students seek answers to each of these questions (Hattie, J 2009).

Good feedforward at Surf Coast Secondary College should:

- close the gap between where a student is and where they are aiming to be.
- help students to use data to move forward with intent.
- be forward looking to improve student learning.
- enhance future performance on assessed tasks.
- be simple for students to understand and act upon.

I always give feedback...

David Carless's (2006) paper on differing perceptions in the feedback / feedforward process revealed:

- Success criteria describing the goals of assessment tasks are frequently difficult for students to understand...

'Sometimes the criteria are not detailed enough or I am not really sure what it actually means in terms of doing the assignment, so I try to guess what [the teachers] are looking for from what they say in class' (research participant).

- Around 70% of teachers stated that they gave detailed feedback often or always. Only 45% of their students agreed...

'Sometimes their comments are not comprehensive enough, once a teacher wrote "you need to elaborate more", but I had no idea what more I could say' (research participant).

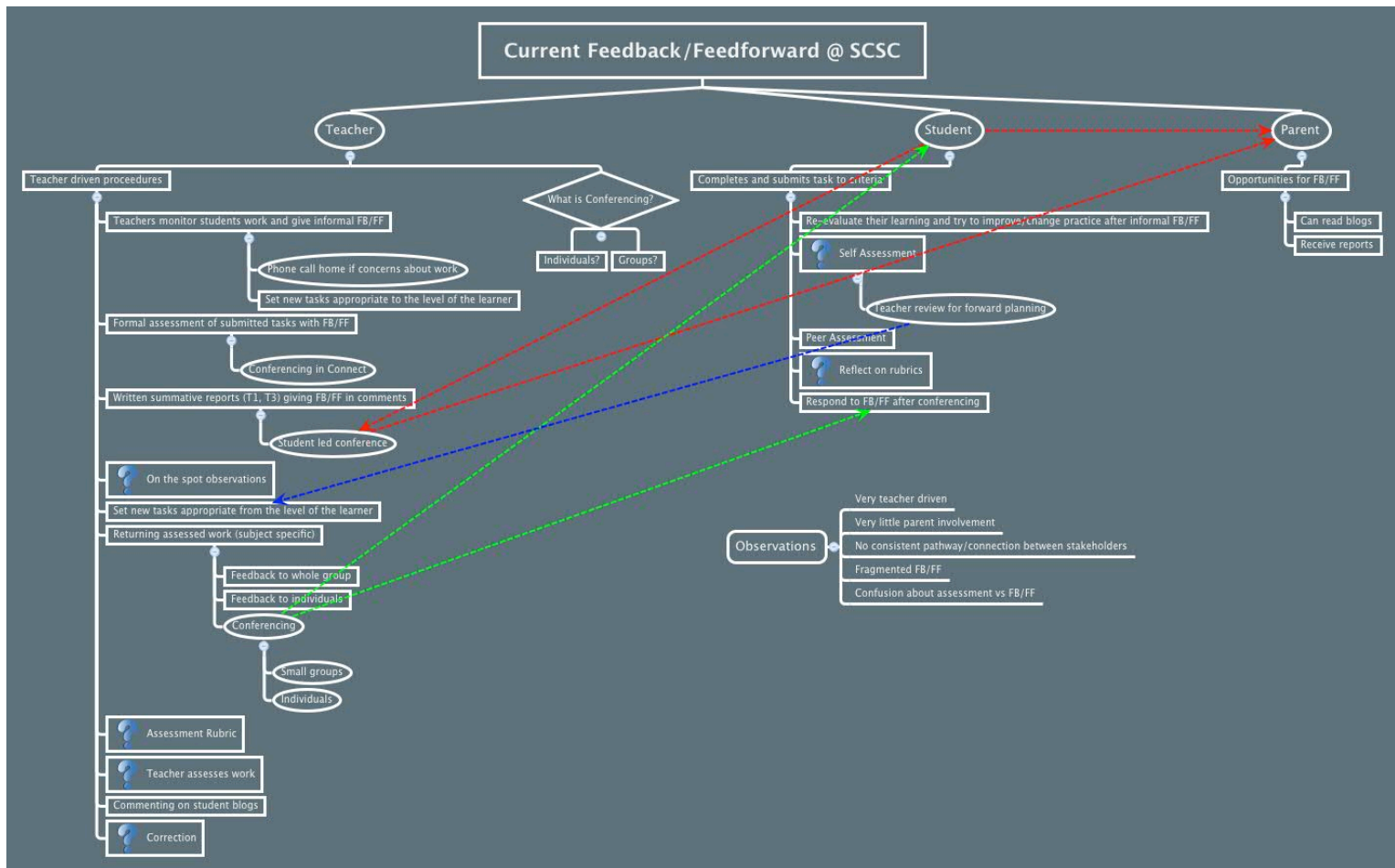
Guidelines for giving feedback and feedforward at Surf Coast Secondary College.

Teachers at Surf Coast Secondary College will:

- ensure students understand the purpose of feedback and feedforward.
- ensure students understand their role in the feedback and feedforward process.
- ensure students understand the feedback and feedforward comments offered.
- give feedback that is timely (no more than two weeks after tasks are submitted).
- be clear and unambiguous with feedback and feedforward statements.
- offer feedback that is supportive, formative and developmental.
- deliver feedback and feedforward information in an appropriate way.

Feedback and Feedforward Structures at Surf Coast Secondary College.

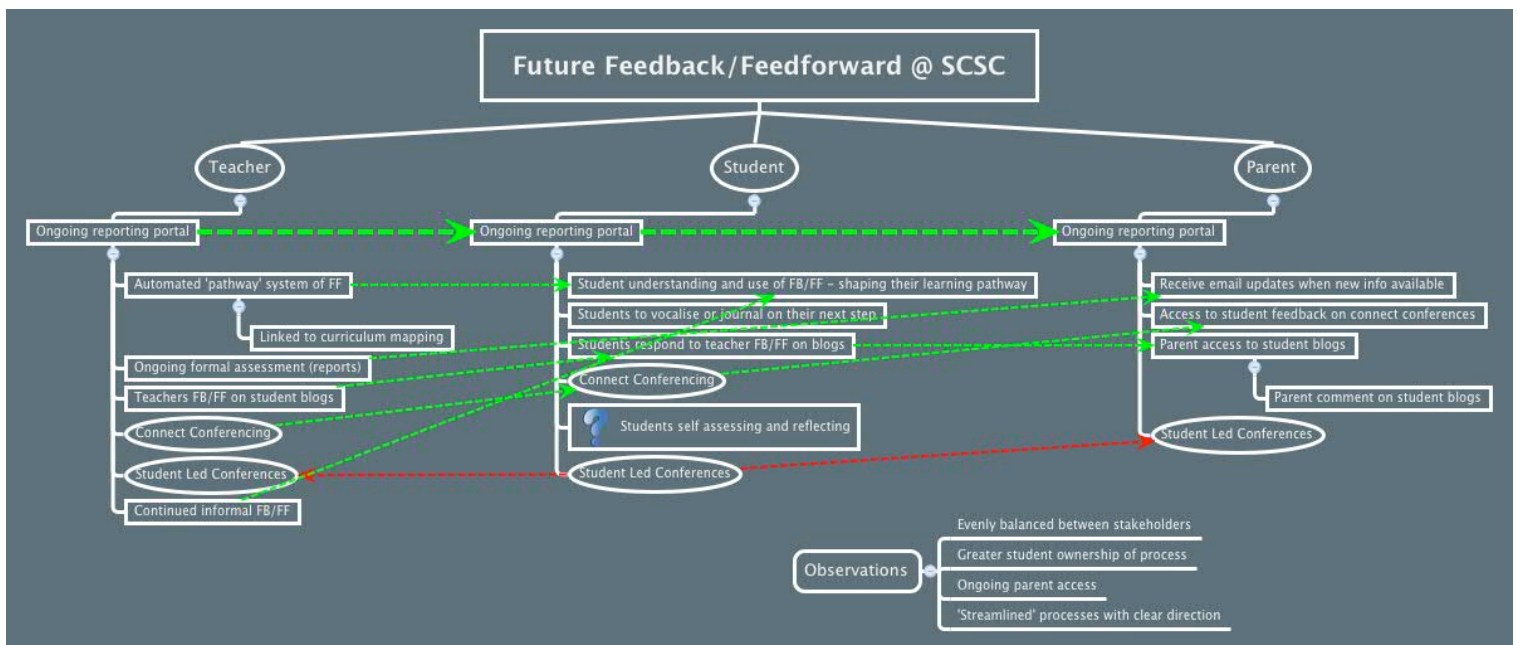
During Term 2 2013, staff reflected on the current feedback and feedforward structures in use. The information was collated in the following flowchart:



The key points to observe are that feedback and feedforward was very teacher driven with the student 'receiving' information but having a lesser role to play in the process. Parents, as the third key stakeholder in the process had very little direct access to information and little to no opportunity to offer their own feedback on their child's learning. This highlights the need for a direct, open, on-going, multi-directional communication channel between the teacher, student and parent.

Other interesting observations include the fragmented nature of the feedback and feedforward being offered, some confusion as to what constitutes feedback and feedforward and the need for clarity on the role of feedback and feedforward in the learning process.

Staff then worked on developing their vision for what they envisaged the future direction of the feedback and feedforward process could look like at SCSC. This information was collated in the following flowchart:



The first key point to observe here is the evenly balanced role of the three key stakeholders (teacher, student and parent) and the open and on-going communication stream via a future 'digital portal'. This option will be further explored as we implement the Learnr 'Study Turf' management software system.

Also worth noting is the 'streamlined' teacher process with more direct links in feeding the feedback and feedforward information to the student and subsequently the parent and the greater level of ownership of information for the student and parent.

The two diagrams above demonstrate the breadth and variety of assessment, feedback and feedforward currently being used by teachers at SCSC. Teachers at SCSC clearly value creativity, diversity and inventiveness when planning assessment and feedback / feedforward strategies that are comprehensive, well structured and meeting the needs of our diverse student cohort.

Preparing students for assessment.

When preparing students for assessment (either formative or summative) teachers at SCSC should ensure that:

- a criteria sheet or assessment rubric is provided before students commence an assessment task.
- students understand the assessment criteria and the requirements of the task.
- a range of preparatory tasks are undertaken to prepare students for assessment.
- assessment tasks cater the different needs of the student group.
- the assessment task is modeled and samples of successfully completed tasks are available.
- Year 11 and 12 students have access to worked samples or modeled answers.

Feedback and Feedforward strategies at Surf Coast Secondary College.

Written Comments.

While feedback and feedforward information can be communicated and shared in a variety of ways, one of the key strategies is the use of written comments. These comments can be provided in hard or soft copy depending on the activity, the nature of the task or the working methodology of individual teachers and students.

SCSC is developing a consistent approach to feedback and feedforward comment writing through the 'Study Turf' digital portal that will enhance student engagement in a our flipped learning environment. Study Turf allows teachers to provide online feedback and feedforward that will be available to students and parents in an ongoing, timely and accessible way.

The purpose of this digital feedback and feedforward process is:

- to open a communication portal between teachers, students and parents where ongoing feedback and feedforward comments on student work will be live, timely, accessible and interactive.
- to personalise student learning, enhance student engagement, encourage self-reflection and allow greater self-direction and ownership over the learning process.
- to heighten the place of the parent in their child's learning.
- to develop a consistent, accessible and open communication stream between all stakeholders in a child's learning.
- to ensure that a consistent approach to feedback and feed-forward language is used that is accessible and understood by all stakeholders.

Common Language for Feedback and Feedforward comments at SCSC.

To support this process, *Feedback & Feedforward Templates* have been developed and are accessible on the SCSC Learning Design Hub. The feedback offered is in three parts:

- 1) What Went Well...** - a reflection on the students relative success linked to the assessment criteria or rubric. The evidence on which the assessment was made.
- 2) Even Better If...** - a chance to suggest strategies for improvement or to highlight areas that needed further exploration, explanation or evidence by the student.
- 3) Where to Next...** - future avenues for the student to explore, more tasks to be completed or strategies for the student to supply further evidence of learning.

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--|----------------|--|
| Teacher | | Student | |
| Subject | | Task | |
| What Went Well... | | | |
| | | | |
| Even Better If... | | | |
| | | | |
| Where To Next... | | | |
| | | | |
| Student Response... | | | |
| | | | |

This version of the *Feedforward & Feedforward Template* allows the teacher to provide the student with a written reflection then give the student the opportunity to respond with their own reflection and interpretation of the teacher’s comments.

SIGNED:

DATE:

This version of the *Feedforward & Feedforward Template* allows the student to reflect on their learning first by ‘self assessing’ before the teacher provides their written comments.

Both these formats are flexible enough to be used in a variety of ways to provide feedback on formative and summative assessment tasks. They can be used for self assessment, peer assessment and teacher assessment as well provide the chance for parents or guest assessors (pre-service teachers, industry professionals for example) to provide written feedback and feedforward comments.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--|----------------|--|
| Teacher | | Student | |
| Subject | | Task | |
| What Went Well... | | | |
| Student: | | | |
| | | | |
| Teacher: | | | |
| | | | |
| Even Better If... | | | |
| Student: | | | |
| | | | |
| Teacher: | | | |
| | | | |
| Where To Next... | | | |
| Student: | | | |
| | | | |
| Teacher: | | | |
| | | | |

SIGNED:

DATE:

Other Feedback and Feedforward Delivery Modes.

To support the teacher's written feedback and feedforward comments provided using the *Feedback & Feedforward Templates* above, it was identified that teachers can and do use the *What Went Well, Even Better If* and *Where to Next* language in a range of other modes as outlined below to offer students detailed formal and informal reflections:

Verbal Feedback.

Usually, we provide most feedback and feedforward verbally. This can be done informally through classroom observations and providing assistance to students as they work through tasks. Verbal feedback and feedforward can also be more formal via conferencing, as progress checks, authentication conversations and student led conferences with parents. The same language and guidelines can be used as with written comments.

Student Self-Assessment.

Self assessment is a powerful tool to get students to reflect on the skills and knowledge they have developed and the ways they are providing evidence of their learning. Questions that help a student to self-assess (other than *What Went Well, Even Better If* and *Where to Next* include:

- What have I been doing?
- How have I been doing it?
- What so I think of what I've been doing?
- How could I improve my approach to the task?

Other self-assessment ideas include creating a PMI, maintaining a learning journal for extended tasks or students completing their own assessment rubric.

Peer Assessment.

Peer assessment can be done in several ways and is a great opportunity for students to share and celebrate their work with their peers. Peer assessment works particularly well when the students have been able to develop the assessment criteria. Students can present their work to a small group for more intimate, informal feedback or even to complete a peer assessment rubric or *Feedforward & Feedforward Comment Sheet*. Students can present to the whole class to allow more students to offer informal, observational feedback.

Small Group or Whole Class Feedback.

In addition to brief comments on student work, teachers could consider providing a whole class or small group with feedback on common mistakes and how to address them, the common strengths of the group and potential future learning tasks for the group. This feedback and feedforward can be given verbally with students taking notes or alternatively an explanatory sheet can be prepared and shared.

Domain Based Feedback and Feedforward Opportunities

In recognition that each domain may have their own unique feedback and feedforward opportunities, the curriculum team (mostly comprising domain leaders) were presented with the opportunity to complete a 'Domain Based Feedback and Feedforward Strategies' document. Below is an example of the completed document for Media in The Arts domain:

DOMAIN: THE ARTS

| Area | Strategy | Teacher's role | Student's role |
|--|---|---|---|
| Media - All Units Years 9-12 | Capacity Matrix drawn from either VCE Study Design or AusVELS. | Teacher prepares a capacity matrix for each new unit of work that highlights the key skills and knowledge to be addressed. This capacity matrix should be regularly referred to throughout the unit. | Students monitor own progress through skill and knowledge acquisition and complete the 'Evidence' section at the completion of the unit. |
| | Assessment rubric with five levels of descriptors for each outcome/skill being assessed. | Teacher provides student with rubric and explains the necessary skills/ knowledge to be address to maximise student achievement level. These are provided for every summative assessment task (both production and theory). | Student refers to rubric before, during and after the completion of the task to ensure work is meeting the assessment criteria. |
| Media - Production Tasks Years 9-12 | Conferencing students throughout the production process as progress checks and for authentication. | Teacher views student's work throughout the various stages of production and offers feedback and feedforward. This is done as part of the authentication process. | Student records feedback and feedforward in a 'production journal' (as part of PDP in VCE). |
| | Work samples of high level student work from previous years presented to students. | Teacher presents work sample and critiques use the WWW, EBI language. | Students draw inspiration from work samples and identify areas of success they can use in their own practice. |
| | Formal written feedback and feedforward at the completion of each phase of the production process (pre, pro, post) using the 'Feedback & Feedforward' proforma. | Teacher completes all three sections of the feedback & feedforward proforma: - What Went Well (WWW) - Even Better If (EBI) - Where To Next (WTN) | Student completes three sections of feedback & feedforward proforma (WWW, EBI, WTN) prior to final submission of work. This may be done prior to teacher feedback or after. This sheet is retained for future reference when completed and returned by teacher. |
| Media - Theory Tasks Years 9-10 | Observation of student's work as they progress through the task. | Teacher circulates the room, views students work regularly and offers informal feedback and feedforward. This is ongoing as part of classroom practice. | Student responds to teacher feedback and feedforward, amends work as needed and seeks further feedback as required. |
| | Formal written feedback and feedforward on the completed theory tasks using the 'Feedback & Feedforward' proforma. | Teacher completes all three sections of the feedback & feedforward proforma: - What Went Well (WWW) - Even Better If (EBI) - Where To Next (WTN) | Student completes 'Student Reflection' section of the 'Feedback & Feedforward' proforma responding to the teacher comments. This sheet is then retained for future reference. |
| Media - Testing Years 9-10 | Pre & Post Testing of student's subject knowledge based on AusVELS Progression Points. | Teacher designs pre-test based on the intended outcomes of the unit. This data can then be used to ensure curriculum foci meet student's identified needs. Post-test is used to measure students achievement in the unit as comparative data. | Student to record pre and post test data and write short reflection on their learning following WWW, EBI, WTN model. |
| Media - SACs Years 11-12 | Short exam style SACs & follow up conversations with questions targeting each key skill and key knowledge of current topic as indicated in the VCE Study Design. | Teacher prepares exam style SAC of appropriate duration. SAC is graded as per VCE guidelines. Teacher follows up with whole class feedback and feedforward conversation. Individual feedback and feedforward conversations are had as needed. | Student makes own notes on SAC page during feedback and feedforward conversations. Student seeks further clarification as necessary. |
| Media - End of Unit Exams 9-11. Practice Exams Year 12. | Extended exam with questions targeting all areas of all units covered during the semester. | Achievement data is shared with students on reports. If timing allows, feedback and feedforward conversations may be had with individual students. | Student uses exam result data to reflect on learning and plan for future learning including study habits, exam preparation skills, etc. |

Example of Feedback and Feedforward Strategies in Action.

('TPL Crosswalk' document developed as part of TPL program 2013)

This sample task has been used in Media classes from Years 9-11 and is an example of how feedback and feedforward can be formalised as part of ongoing classroom practice that moves beyond simply 'verbal' feedback from 'observation'.

Firstly, student learning foci were established under the headings: *Disciplinary Knowledge* - What will students know or know how?; *Capabilities* - What will student do?; and *Attitudes, Motivations and Dispositions* - What will students be?

Once these goals were in place, feedback and feedforward strategies were developed and enacted to enhance students abilities to achieved the learning foci. These strategies were mapped (represented numerically) against the the learning foci to ensure each was addressed. Below is the 'Crosswalk' document prepared:

TPL Crosswalk - Making Connections

Test Class - Year 11 Media, Production Process Tasks

| TPL Student Learning Focus | Capabilities & Strategies |
|---|--|
| Disciplinary Knowledge - 'Know & Know How'... • Manage the production process efficiently. 1. 2. 4. • Develop ideas by using feedback/feedforward information. 1. 2. 3. | 1. Consistently conference with students throughout the production process with students recording feedback/feedforward in a 'production journal' as part of the Production Design Plan (PDP). 2. Formal written feedback/feedforward at the completion of each stage of the production process (pre, pro, post) using the method: - What Went Well (WWW) - Even Better If (EBI) - Where To Next (WTN) 3. Students complete 'Student Reflection' box on feedback/feedforward sheet to demonstrate understanding of teacher comments. 4. Developed flipped resources for production process (posted to Weebly page). 5. Students reflect on own practice using WWW, EBI, WTN at end of each week of production in 'production journal' in PDP. |
| General Capabilities - 'Do'... • Use feedback/feedforward to enhance future learning. 1. 2. 3. • Reflect on own performance and identify areas for future improvement. 3. 5. | |
| Attitudes, Motivations & Dispositions - 'Be'... • Self directing more of their own learning. 3. 4. 5. • Engaged in learning. 1. 2. 4. 5. • Working independently. 3. 4. 5. | |

One interesting observation during the implementation of this new approach to media production tasks was that students became a lot less focused on the end result (ie a letter grade, percentage, summative result, etc) and were much more interested in the ongoing feedback that was being offered.

The opportunity for students to self-assess was also very popular as it gave students to chance to *explain* what they had learned through the task rather than simply letting their final product be the only evidence of learning.

This approach is easily adaptable to other contexts in other domains.

Making the Transition to a Digital Communication Portal.

When making the transition to *Study Turf*, our digital communication portal, the need for feedback and feedforward functionality was recognised. This was identified in the 'preferred future feedback and feedforward structure' developed by staff in the deployment flowchart (as outlined earlier).

As part of this process sometime was spent as a whole staff working in domain groups on 'Imagineering' the communication portal (a Quality Learning Australia tool). The key question for imagineering was 'What would the perfect communication portal be like at SCSC?'. Two of the focus areas directly linked to the Feedback and Feedforward components of the portal, namely 'Where will we record the progression of learning?' and 'When will we share our assessment?'. The staff responses to imagineering were collated below:

IMAGINEERING - "WHAT WOULD THE PERFECT 'COMMUNICATION PORTAL' BE LIKE AT SCSC?"

COLLATED FROM DOMAIN BASED FEEDBACK.

Non-negotiable features of Learnr at SCSC: Timetable, CASES, Rolls/Attendance, Communication between Teachers, Students & Parents, Assessment Data with Graphics (linked to AusVELS & VCE), Student Management Tool (with 'N Form' generation), Feedback and Feedforward as reporting (printable), Links to Weebly and external subject resources ('the cloud'), Blogs (built-in), Bulletins (Staff & Student), Calendar....

| Interface / Virtual Environment 'What will it look like?' | Process 'How will we use it?' | Assessment Timeline 'When will we share our assessment?' |
|---|---|---|
| Easy to navigate. Non-cluttered. Coloured themes. Local environment info (weather station, surf, etc) Visual 'Alert' system when new information/communication available. Private 'in-box' for parent messaging. Parent friendly (not intimidating for low IT or literacy skills). Student and teacher photos for personalisation. Key words in Indonesian. | Blogs embedded. Links to external stuff. electronic rubrics. Integrated submission and response to student work. 'Dashboard'. System for student reflection on results. Parent/teacher communication system. Common assessment tasks listed - coloured system for submitted/not yet submitted. Indication of work due throughout a term. | Within 2 weeks of a major assessment piece (Eng. Hums. Maths. Sci. Arts). Formal Assessment during weeks 3-6 or 7-10. So 2-4 assessments for semester (HAPE). Button to show that parents have viewed assessment. Behaviour/interdisciplinary to be continuous. Agreement on the number of assessment tasks to be reported on - to be determined by domain groups. Flexibility is important. |
| Feedback & Feedforward 'Where will we record the progression of learning?' | Communicating to Stakeholders 'How interactive should it be?' | Ideas 'What other ideas can we share?' |
| After each conference. Student self reflection. Progression points. Radar Graph of AusVELS Domain based feedback & feedforward comment banks for each year level. | Colour coding of work submitted, due, outstanding. Digital signatures for permission forms. Notifications and reminders for permission forms. Due dates - calendar. Auto-notification about absences and out of uniform. Links to teacher communication from student timetable. Parents and students to feel sense of ownership. Engaging to students. | Online organiser/diary/calendar for students and teachers. Attendance alert for team leaders. Alerts to students/parents on assignment submission dates. Not every parent has internet. Alerts for teachers when assessment results are due. Links to class dojo. Medical alerts in student profiles. |

This information was shared with the school leadership team so as to identify the key priorities for the first phase Study Turf. The information was then shared with the Learnr team (software developers of Study Turf), along with the feedback and feedforward template documents, so that the software package could be tailored to suit our identified needs.

As such, the feedback and feedforward language protocols are now embedded into the way teachers provide feedback and feedforward on assessment tasks. These three key comment foci also form the foundation of the conferencing process and subsequent reporting.

More information on using Study Turf as the communication tool for student feedback and feedforward will forthcoming.