

Giving & Receiving Feedback

"Before you tell me how to do it better, before you lay out your big plans for changing, fixing, and improving me, before you teach me how to pick myself up and dust myself off so that I can be shiny and successful--know this: I've heard it before.

I have been graded, rated, and ranked. Coached, screened, and scored. I've been picked first, picked last, and not picked at all. And that was just kindergarten." Qtd in Stone & Heen, 2014.

Ah, feedback! We receive so much of it over the course of our personal and professional life, so why is it so difficult to give and, if we're honest, receive feedback? I love what the leading researchers & Lecturers on Law from Harvard Law School, Douglas Stone & Sheila Heen (2014) have to say about The Art of Receiving Feedback in their book. Here is Sheila Heen speaking to her work:

<https://youtu.be/wnojHbEBGqU>

There are a ton of other great texts around feedback. Recently, my friend & colleague Larissa Sansom sent me this fantastic link around [Moving from Feedback to Feedforward](#) on the incredible teaching website, [Cult of Pedagogy](#). Teachers need to check that post out! I also recommend the research article by John Hattie & Helen Timperley (2007) for those interested in learning about the research around feedback.

Feedback & Teaching:

It seems a bit like commonsense to say "teachers need feedback," but the reality is that teachers still often work in very isolated ways and the feedback they do receive from students, administrators, parents, ourselves, and colleagues is not always the type of feedback that will help them grow and improve. It does seem strange that there is so much time spent discussing ways to give meaningful feedback to students but there aren't many structured mechanisms for teachers to receive it. This TedTalk by Bill Gates really drives this point home. Although I don't always agree with where the [Gates Foundation](#) has gone in their education endeavours and the [research](#) is showing it has not been hugely successful, I do appreciate that they are working in this field, listening to experts, and providing much needed resources and funding. As I believe we can often learn the most from our mistakes and failures, I am hopeful that something fruitful can come out

of their 7 year venture which aimed to improve teacher effectiveness by changing the way schools recruit, retain, and reward teachers.

<https://youtu.be/81Ub0SMxZQo>

As I re-watch this video, I am struck by the importance of having teaching/leadership feedback come from someone who has mastery and experience in the same professional domain or at the very least have credibility with the people receiving the feedback. If the coaching structure in your district requires professional observation, then expertise/mastery would have to be considered in the selection of coaches. I also do think that observation feedback can be delivered by people outside of the coaching relationship, such as colleagues, video, etc and that a coach can help their learning partner navigate feedback and their next steps. Lots to think about. For me, it all comes back to purpose and person.