

This series of resources presents effective practices implemented by some of the 27 schools involved in the original High School Flexibility Enhancement Pilot Project (HSFEPP) as they explored ways to use flexibility to increase student engagement and achievement and to support quality teaching in their schools.

This series represents a sampling of the effective practices being implemented in redesign schools across the province.

## ONGOING FEEDBACK

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*Teacher, James Fowler High School*

### What is Ongoing Feedback?

Ongoing Feedback can take a variety of forms:

In peer feedback, a student is given feedback by other students, on his/her ideas and how he/she has written them. The students providing the feedback offer other perspectives to the student. The experience of hearing feedback from peers can be a powerful one.

Says one student: “I would never read my essays out loud if I was alone, but I do now because I am working with someone else and I have asked them to give feedback. This way I am not stuck in my own little bubble; I can see what my audience is thinking, and I learn to improve my work for the audience. And so I get better at doing self-assessment. A student can really grow this way. For me, it was really specific to me and made my writing stronger, on different levels.”

In self-feedback, students write comments on their own report card: For this, students use their own judgement, but teachers help by giving some guidelines so students know what to focus on, and they give some specific examples as well.

Says another student: “Students are not fully known by their teachers, so this allows us to have a say. I think students are accurate on their comments, but some actually go harder on themselves than their teacher does.”

“We actually get used to evaluating ourselves throughout the class, not just at the time of the report card.”

Teacher feedback focuses more on assessment for learning as opposed to assessment of learning. Teachers provide immediate “low-stakes” feedback that allows students to assess their higher-level thinking abilities. As one teacher noted, “By quieting students’ anxiety through continuous critical feedback, they begin to feel more confident to take risks, push envelopes and ultimately achieve mastery.”



Students do self-assessment on a bulls-eye to indicate their understanding of a topic. Another teacher uses Socrativ, an online app that allows students to use peer feedback to tackle challenges in math. The idea is that there is more than one-way communication – not only does the student know whether they “get it”, but the teacher will know what steps they need to take to facilitate the learning of all students in the class.”

## Why schools implement Ongoing Feedback

Teachers at James Fowler studied the effectiveness of assessment and found that simply giving a mark or circling an error is not enough – specific feedback is needed. In fact, they found comments alone yield that best results. As one teacher puts it, “We have learned that not everything that is counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.”

Ongoing feedback is a way to empower students by strengthening the relationships around them: “On the first day of school there is a barrier between you and the teachers,” says one student, “But through ongoing feedback you become a lot more comfortable with communicating with the teachers as they truly get to know you.”

Says another: “You feel that the teachers are willing to spend time on you.”

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*Student, James Fowler High School*

## How success is measured

The success of the practice is measured by student feedback, teacher feedback, parent feedback, diploma exam results, and the *TELL Them FROM Me* surveys.

## What we learned

This practice might merit expansion beyond the walls of the school, into the community. Many students have already experienced feedback, of both good and bad quality, on the Internet. Training on how to best use external feedback from the community would be to their benefit.

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*Student, James Fowler High School*

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