



Feedback studies tend to show very high effects on learning.

Cost	Evidence strength	Impact (months)	Effect size
£££££		+8	0.63

What is it?

Feedback is information given to the learner or teacher about the learner's performance relative to learning goals or outcomes. It should aim towards (and be capable of producing) improvement in students' learning. Feedback redirects or refocuses either the teacher's or the learner's actions to achieve a goal, by aligning effort and activity with an outcome. It can be about the output of the activity, the process of the activity, the student's management of their learning or self-regulation, or them as individuals (which tends to be the least effective). This feedback can be verbal or written, or can be given through tests or via digital technology. It can come from a teacher or someone taking a teaching role, or from peers (see [Peer tutoring](#)).

How effective is it?

Feedback studies tend to show very high effects on learning. However, it also has a very high range of effects and some studies show that feedback can have negative effects and make things worse. It is therefore important to understand the potential benefits and the possible limitations of feedback as a teaching and learning approach. In general, research-based approaches that explicitly aim to provide feedback to learners, such as Bloom's 'mastery learning', tend to have a positive impact. Feedback has effects across all age groups. Research in schools has focused particularly on its impact on English, mathematics and, to a lesser extent, science.

Evidence of feedback in the Arab world showed the powerful impact of teachers' written feedback on students' writing skills. Studies in Iraq, Jordan, Oman, and Saudi Arabia reported that whenever teachers provide students with optimistic and constructive written feedback, they become more encouraged to write and the quality of their writing improved. Peer feedback in UAE and Kuwait significantly improved students writing skills in English but also increased student's interaction and collaborative learning.

However, researchers have highlighted some potential barriers for teachers to use feedback as a

teaching approach to correct students' errors. Examples include lack of teacher training on constructive feedback and large classroom size which delay teachers from following students' progress and providing suitable feedback for each learner.

To date, research in computer-mediated corrective feedback is limited in this region despite the few reported benefits. More research is needed in this area, including using different methods and software packages, and examining different writing aspects.

How secure is the evidence?

There is a substantial number of reviews and meta-analyses of the effects of feedback. Educational (rather than psychological or theoretical) studies tend to identify positive benefits where the aim of feedback is to improve learning outcomes in reading or mathematics or in recall of information. A recent meta-analysis of studies focusing on formative assessment in schools indicates the gains can be more modest, suggesting that an improvement of about three months' additional progress is achievable in schools or nearer four months when the approach is supported with professional development. However, some areas of the curriculum may benefit more from feedback than others. A recent meta-analysis of the impact of formative assessment on writing indicates gains of 8 months' progress are achievable, which is more consistent with other feedback research.

What are the costs?

The costs of providing more effective feedback are not high. However, it is likely to require sustained professional development to improve practice, and this includes active inquiry and evaluation. Overall, costs are estimated as under £80 per pupil and very low.

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Costs originally calculated in GBP; USD and JOD calculated via oanda.com on 22/09/20.

As yet there is no information about local costs.

What should I consider?

Providing effective feedback is challenging. These findings from the broader research may help you

to implement it well. Effective feedback tends to: be specific, accurate and clear (e.g. "It was good because you..." rather than just "correct"); compare what a learner is doing right now with what they have done wrong before (e.g. "I can see you were focused on improving X as it is much better than last time's Y..."); encourage and support further effort; be given sparingly so that it is meaningful; provide specific guidance on how to improve and not just tell students when they are wrong; be supported with effective professional development for teachers.

Broader research suggests that feedback should be about complex or challenging tasks or goals as this is likely to emphasise the importance of effort and perseverance as well as be more valued by the pupils.

Feedback can come from peers as well as adults (see [Peer tutoring](#)).

Have you considered the challenges of implementing feedback effectively and consistently in your school?

What professional development is likely to be necessary for successful implementation of feedback in your school?

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