



# How can we foster innovation in teaching?

**I**nnovation in teaching and learning is essential to respond to the needs of 21st century learners. Teachers can be drivers of innovation in classrooms if they are supported by education systems. This chapter explores issues around adopting pedagogical approaches that are effective in meeting the needs of today's diverse learners. It includes an explanation of alternative education methods that are prevalent in school systems today. The chapter then examines the role of feedback in supporting teachers, and helping them innovate and develop as educators.

## Note regarding data on Israel

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and are under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem, and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

## Introduction



Traditional teaching methods have largely relied on imparting content knowledge through memorisation and providing passive roles to students in their learning. However, to create an effective and engaging learning environment that fosters 21st century skills such as critical thinking and collaborative problem solving, teachers need to blend traditional techniques with newer, more innovative approaches. Yet, teachers cannot bear the sole responsibility for this. School leaders, schools, and school systems need to help support this shift by providing genuine and constructive feedback which helps teachers implement successful strategies and become more effective educators.

### Topic 1: Alternative education methods as a lever for teaching innovation

#### Why is this topic important?

Alternative education (AE) is commonly defined as those pedagogical approaches and learning environments that differ from mainstream education. AE methods are currently being employed in schools across developed nations and many emerging economies as a safety valve for those students who leave school early, as well as for those who have been unable to learn and thrive in the traditional education system. They provide a channel for introducing innovation into education systems that have been slow to adapt to increasing learner diversity and new societal needs (e.g. teaching 21st century skills). They also serve as a counterpoint to reforms which have focused mainly on curriculum control and high-stakes testing and assessment, and have therefore resulted in the ‘thinning out’ of pedagogic innovation.

AE practices are expanding. In the United States, AE institutions are present in 2,000 school districts and serve over 500,000 students (Vogell and Fresques, 2017). In the European Union, there are at least 13 countries that have developed a network of Schools for Second Chance (S2C), the French network being the most established. Although these schools are extremely different across and within countries, they do share a series of related practices that have proven successful in engaging students who possess an unsuccessful track record in mainstream education (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2014). Examples of these methods include developing a holistic approach to students’ capacities and needs, focusing on meaningful experiences and interests, and specific work involving tutoring and individualisation (Lange and Sletten, 2002; European Commission, 2001). In the United Arab Emirates, for example, new programmes around creative design and innovation, and English language instruction, reflect this alternative approach. How can alternative education methods be used to encourage pedagogical innovation on a larger scale? And what supports will teachers need to adopt effective AE methods in the classrooms of tomorrow?

 **Success is when students speak confidently, when they know their strengths and weaknesses, when they take action to solve a problem.** 

**Stephen Ritz, Founder, Green Bronx Machine**

## What is the evidence?

At its core, AE has always been a source for innovation and experimentation. Thus, it is no accident that many educational principles and pedagogical approaches that are now considered mainstream have their roots in AE (Sliwka and Yee, 2015). Traditional alternative schools, or those schools that have been explicitly committed to the principles of alternative approaches (Montessori, Waldorf and Reggio-Emilia, among others), have continued experimenting and updating their methodologies, particularly in early education. Indeed, the persistence and growing number of schools that fall under the umbrella of “free schools” (schools that use AE methods exclusively, particularly non-directive methods) in Catalonia (now at 50) and the U.S. (now at 100), for example, are evidence of the growing success of alternative educational opportunities.



## Difficulty measuring AE success

But as Dahlin (2007) found when looking at the impact of Sweden’s Waldorf Schools, gathering specific evidence on the success of AE can be difficult. This is due to the small number of schools developing AE approaches, their holistic, intertwined sets of principles, and the importance of family contexts (usually highly-educated parents). Aron (2006) likewise points out that there are few rigorous studies to date that examine AE student outcomes, and suggests we therefore need to rethink the types of measures which should be targeted and monitored. A particularly interesting case that mixes the goals of alternative education with those developed by S2C beyond early childhood and primary education, is the Federation of Public Innovative Schools (FESPI) in France, a network of 12 schools that have *tried* to show their successful practices through diverse case studies.

## AE methods that foster innovation

Another important way in which AE methods are fostering innovation comes from networks of schools that share part, if not all, of the principles of AE without ascribing to any one movement. As discussed in the research being developed by Istance and Paniagua (forthcoming), these networks of schools are implementing practices such as gamification; blended, experiential or embodied learning; and new literacies which, in most cases, are updated implementations of long-standing teaching approaches rooted in AE. Another common approach shared by these networks is the emphasis placed on students’ voices and agency, coupled with a growing awareness of the need to be acutely sensitive to their individual differences. This can be achieved through AE approaches including peer collaboration, diverse forms of blended learning, a focus on the potential of all children, and a non-restrictive interpretation of the curriculum.

As shown in Box 5.1, PBL has also gained significant attention in the last few years. As Figure 5.1 below shows, there is great variation in how frequently teachers engage in this specific AE practice. The data show that PBL is especially predominant among teachers in Mexico (57%), Abu Dhabi (53%), Chile (53%), and Australia (52%), while it is used considerably less often in Croatia (10%), The Czech Republic (12%) and South Korea (13%). Overall, 28% of teachers across OECD countries participating in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) engage their students in projects that require more than one week to complete.

 I invite people from different areas and careers to come to school and discuss their career choices– not just doctors and lawyers.   
Soonufat Supramaniam, Teacher, Malaysia

### Box 5.1 **Project-based learning (PBL): Innovation through alternative education methods**

Currently, PBL is one of the leading innovative practices being implemented in schools (and networks of schools) worldwide (see Figure 5.1, and Istance and Paniagua, forthcoming). Although there is a good deal of evidence that discusses its positive impact (e.g., Hmelo-Silver, Duncan and Chin, 2007), other research suggests that the link between PBL instruction and positive student achievement outcomes cannot be established with certainty (Kokotsaki, Menzies and Wiggins, 2016). This contradiction sheds light on the fact that research on PBL has a difficult time capturing its multiple dimensions of impact, and that certain qualitative variables are still difficult to assess using standardised tests.

In terms of pedagogical principles, PBL encapsulates many of the learning goals that have been present in most AE approaches. Examples of this include the importance of learning by doing, connecting learning with real world problems, the role of the tutor as supervisor and moderator, the central use of group work and collaboration, and emphasising the end-product of the project (Harmer, 2014).

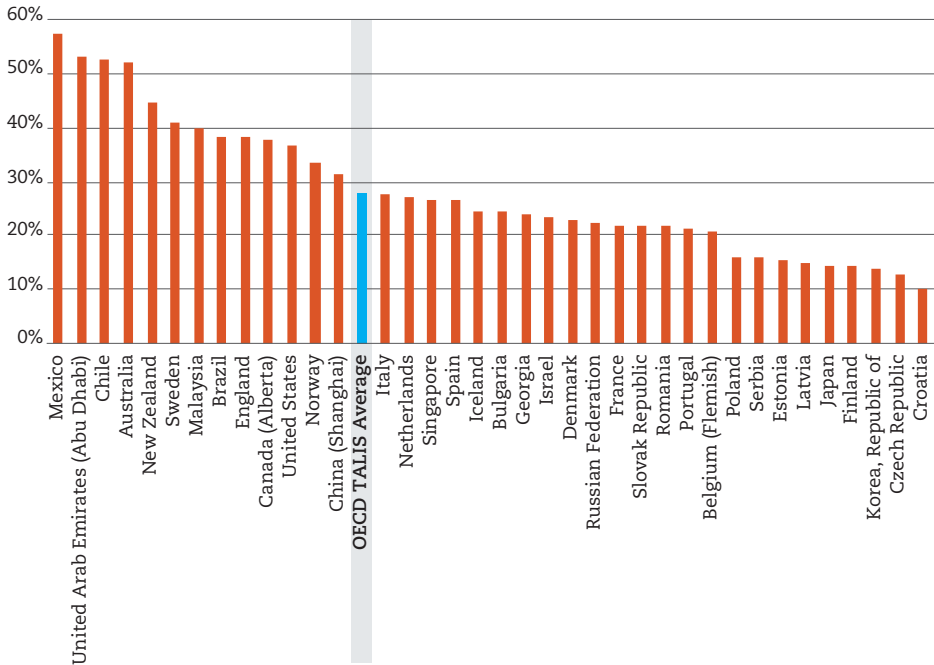
There are a myriad of other scattered practices and programmes (e.g., open-space learning, focus on play, strategic questioning, and art and creativity programmes), and new learning concepts that are rooted in the importance of non-directive teaching. They provide time for students to experiment, formulate ideas, discuss and test. These innovative techniques can be traced back to AE concepts, although they are also informed by new evidence-based research (van den Broek, 2012), and more refined developments within sociocultural and experience-based approaches, as well the use of new technologies (Istance and Paniagua, forthcoming).

According to the OECD's work on Innovative Learning Environments (OECD, 2015), six overall strategies are needed to ensure the further implementation and sustainability of innovations:

1. Creating culture change in schools;
2. Having a clear focus and prioritising targets and goals;
3. Generating knowledge about the learning that is taking place;
4. Fostering collegiality (collaboration and co-operation among teachers);
5. Using information and communication technology (ICT) and digital platforms; and,
6. Creating specific change agents and specialist institutes to support change and transformation.

 We need to move from schooling 'to' children and embrace schooling 'with' children.   
Stephen Ritz, Founder, Green Bronx Machine

Figure 5.1 **Proportion of teachers that engage their students in projects that require at least one week to complete**



Note: The data from the United States should be interpreted carefully. This is because the United States did not meet the international standards for participation rates.

Source: OECD (2013a), Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS): 2013 complete database, [http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?datasetcode=talis\\_2013%20](http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?datasetcode=talis_2013%20).



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933691116>

The current desire to adopt an innovation agenda offers new ways to (re)connect with the ongoing and diverse experiences of AE as a platform to expand the way teaching and learning relationships, and learning environments, are imagined. Doing so can better address the innovation challenges that many schools and school systems will face as we head into the future.

### **Lessons from the field: What are practitioners saying?**

The 2017 Qudwa Global Teachers’ Forum gathered three panellists who had each successfully implemented the alternative education method of project-based learning in their respective contexts. The panel included Ibtisam Al Shemili, a teacher and mentor from the United Arab Emirates; Stephen Ritz, a teacher, author, and founder of Green Bronx Machine, from New York City, United States; and Soonufat Supramaniam, a teacher with Teach For Malaysia, serving in a rural school.

I wanted my students to like physics so I moved from just theoretical discussions to practical projects that link physics with reality.   
**Ibtisam Al Shemelli, Teacher, UAE**

 The biggest success is when students realise that their ideas make a positive impact.   
Stephen Ritz, Founder, Green Bronx Machine

## **Lesson 1: AE methods are effective in making lessons both practical and relevant to current issues**

Project-based learning is a useful tool to link content learning with meaningful experiences for students while, at the same time, addressing critical global challenges. When students are more actively engaged in the learning process, it also increases their awareness of how they can make an impact both in their own community and globally. Stephen Ritz's Green Bronx Machine is a prime example of how students can get involved in addressing the dual crises of climate change and food security, while rebuilding their own community (see Box 5.2).

### **Box 5.2 Merging K-12 education with urban agriculture in the Bronx**

Stephen Ritz merges K-12 education with urban agriculture, environmental sustainability, healthy eating, and 21st century workforce development through the Green Bronx Machine programme. Initially, Mr. Ritz began the programme as an after-school exercise for his students. However, based on the success in his classroom, he expanded it to the school and then the community. He incorporates gardening and planting into the curriculum as part of the programme, and helps improve the knowledge and eating habits of the students. Every planting activity has a detailed lesson plan behind it, which is carefully mapped to academic learning goals.



Through planting, Mr Ritz's students acquire a practical understanding of statistics, ratios, proportions, fractions, germination and ways to process data. His students also inform people in the community about healthy eating, and write argumentative essays about what they learn.

## **Lesson 2: AE methods help redefine what is success**

Limited resources and strict adherence to traditional teaching practices may hinder the implementation of AE methods. But, when implemented successfully, AE techniques can help redefine what success is, and expand it beyond grades on exams. The panellists agreed that when students are passionate about societal problems or topics of interest and can link them in meaningful ways to their school subjects, more effective learning takes place. This linking enables students to believe in the impact of their ideas and in their ability to engage in civic discourse, as well as to know their strengths and weaknesses when taking action on problems.

## **Lesson 3: AE methods help education go beyond the walls of the school**

Active community involvement is a cornerstone of AE methods. It can be an opportunity for students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to identify careers from

 **We need to push the walls of the classroom out and bring the community in.**   
 Stephen Ritz, Founder, Green Bronx Machine

a wider array of choices. The panellists agreed that inviting professionals into the classroom is quite effective. Resources are often generated from interactions with community stakeholders (see Box 5.3). In engaging with the community, students learn how to express themselves, how to fund-raise, and how to align their projects with the needs of their neighbours.

### Box 5.3 Expanding opportunities for students

Soonufat Supramaniam regularly organises several activities for his students, to broaden their worldview and the opportunities available to them:

- **Collaborating with other schools for performance arts:** To boost student confidence and motivate them to learn English in new ways, Mr Supramaniam has organised full-length musicals, as part of a performing arts festival. To do so, he collaborates with other schools. About 30 students participated in his last project and performed at an arts festival in the city.
- **Career awareness programmes:** Mr Supramaniam organises workshops on careers, in which students create resumes and practice interviewing. Once a month, different professionals are invited into the classroom to speak with students about their career path.
- **Student leadership projects:** To help students see themselves as change-makers, students are asked to identify a community project where they see a problem and come up with a solution. After a series of workshops and mentoring, students pitch their solutions to the school management team, to teachers and to possible funders.

## Key action points

The panellists identified three key action points they felt could support the wider implementation of alternative education methods.

1. **Introduce national policies for curricula and syllabuses that recognise the need for a holistic approach to teaching 21st century skills:** Teaching related to global challenges needs to be adapted across subjects and go beyond knowledge derived from textbooks. Alternative education methods can be useful in developing these competencies.
2. **Identify crucial curricular areas where traditional teaching methods should be re-evaluated to ensure that effective learning processes take shape:** An essential source of information is also the level and extent to which AE methods are already implemented in schools, and to detect where additional support is needed to increase capacity to adopt more innovative approaches.

3. **Ensure that school policies establish and maintain strong connections with local communities:** AE methods like project-based learning do not necessarily constrain learning to within the school building. Investing in fora where schools can be informed of and adapt to the needs of industry, non-profits and other organisations within the community, is key. Providing students with platforms to interact with the community and learn about possible career paths can strengthen the impact of learning.



## Topic 2: Giving teachers better feedback

### Why is this topic important?



If done well, feedback – broadly defined as any communication teachers receive about their teaching, based on some form of interaction with their work (e.g. observing classrooms and the teaching of students, discussing teachers' curriculum or the results of their students), (OECD, 2014a) – can empower teachers and students alike. For new teachers, feedback (from peers, mentors and others) is especially important (Jensen et al., 2012). According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), truly effective feedback addresses three essential questions:

- Where am I going? (What are the goals? This is referred to as *feed up*.)
- How am I doing? (What progress is being made toward these goals? This is referred to as *feed back*.)
- Where to next? (What do I need to do in the future to make even better progress? This is referred to as *feed forward*.)

For teachers, feedback may not only create opportunities to reflect upon goals for teaching practices and student learning (*feed up*), and progress made in light of those goals (*feed back*), but it also supports and motivates teachers to develop and grow in their own careers (*feed forward*) (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2010; OECD, 2013b). Much of this potential for improvement depends on the extent to which feedback is purposeful (i.e. related to learning goals), regular and formative, and whether it's embedded in schools, school networks and education systems as a lever for school improvement (OECD, 2005). According to international data, many teachers today unfortunately see feedback systems as largely administrative tasks, disconnected from meaningful professional development (OECD, 2014a). How can we redesign teacher feedback mechanisms to better address teacher needs and goals? And how can we do so in a way that keeps outcomes and attitudes positive for teachers and students alike?

 All feedback requires trust between provider and recipients. It's important to trust and value the thoughts of the person giving the feedback.   
Souad Belcaid, Teacher, USA



 **Feedback is not criticism, it should not be a checklist. It should be a thorough explanation to teachers.** 

Souad Belcaid, Teacher, USA

## What is the evidence?

In the 2013 edition of TALIS (OECD, 2014a), teachers were specifically asked about the feedback they receive at their school sites. Teacher feedback is common across TALIS countries, with 88% of teachers reporting receiving feedback on their teaching, though this varies from lows of 55% in Iceland and 57% in Italy, to highs of 97% in Abu Dhabi and 99% in England (OECD, 2014a).

## Who is most likely to provide feedback to teachers?

According to TALIS (OECD, 2014a), feedback is most commonly provided by school principals (for 54% of teachers), members of the school management team (49%) and other teachers (42%). Feedback from external individuals and bodies (29%) and assigned mentors (19%) are the two least common sources. Moreover, many individual teachers receive feedback from multiple sources. On average, 56% of teachers report receiving feedback from one or two sources and 31% receive feedback from three or more sources. Feedback from students can also be used to improve teaching practices (see Box 5.4).

### Box 5.4 Norwegian teachers use formative student feedback

In 2011, teacher appraisal principles and guidelines were published as part of a joint national initiative by the Norwegian Student Organisation and the Union of Education Norway, the country's largest union for teachers and school leaders. The guidelines describe how students and teachers can work together to evaluate learning objectives, working methods, learning strategies, content, and organisation of classes by using questionnaires, dialogues, journals and observations. The results provide concrete steps for follow-up and distribute responsibilities and timelines for both students and teachers.

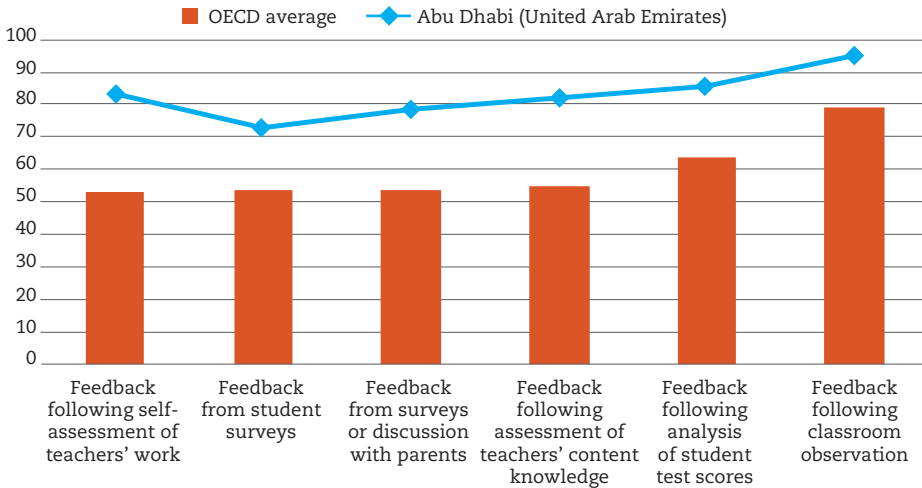
Source: Education Directorate (2011), *Undervisningsvurdering– en veileder for elever og lærere* [Educational Assessment- a guide for students and teachers], Education Directorate.

## Which feedback methods are most common?

Feedback can be based on classroom observations, student surveys, assessments of teacher knowledge, analyses of student test scores, self-assessments, or discussions with parents. As Figure 5.2 illustrates, on average, 79% of teachers report receiving feedback following classroom observations, while all other methods are mentioned by over half of teachers across countries. However, there are big differences between countries. To illustrate, while feedback following classroom observations is reported by more than 95% of teachers in Abu Dhabi, England, Malaysia, Poland, Romania and Singapore, less than 50% of teachers report such feedback in Finland, Iceland, Italy and Spain.


Figure 5.2 **Methods of providing feedback to teachers**

Percentage of lower secondary education teachers who report receiving feedback via the following methods



Note: Teachers reported receiving feedback by at least one of the following: external individuals or bodies, principals, member(s) of school management teams, assigned mentors, or other teachers. Items ranked in ascending percentage order.

Source: OECD (2013a), *Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS): 2013 complete database*, [http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?datasetcode=talis\\_2013%20](http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?datasetcode=talis_2013%20).

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### Feedback is positive for pedagogical and personal development

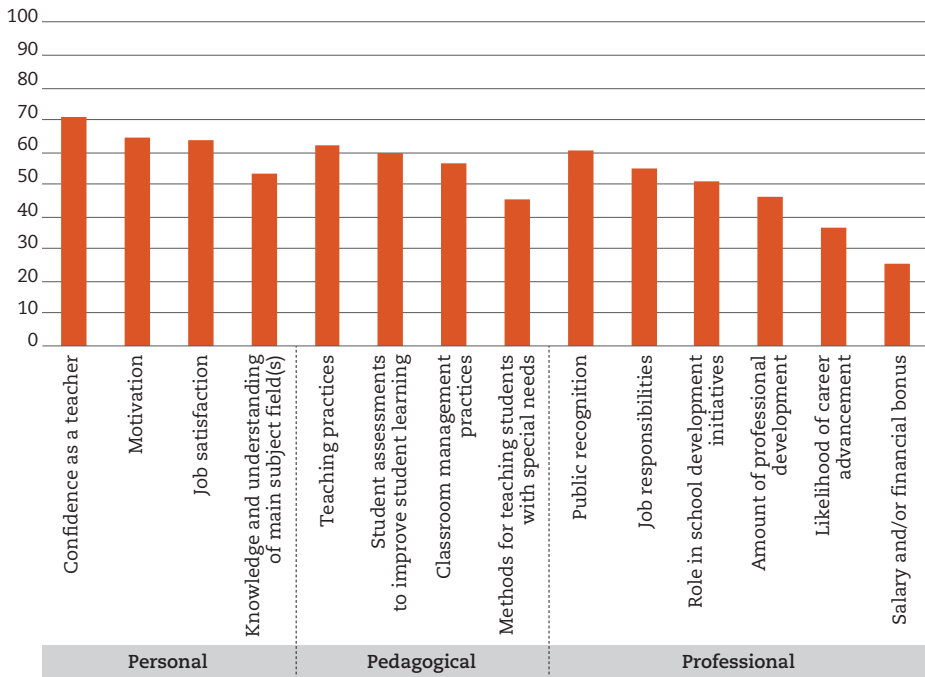
Feedback can stimulate teachers' personal attitudes and feelings about their jobs, their teaching practices, and their professional development. As Figure 5.3 shows, after feedback, positive changes occur in the pedagogical and personal development of teachers. Over 70% of teachers across TALIS countries report a moderate or large increase in their teaching confidence after receiving feedback, 62% report that the feedback they received resulted in positive changes in their teaching practices, and 59% report that it led to moderate or large positive changes in their use of student assessments to improve learning.

### The need to make teacher feedback more effective and motivating

Yet, despite the positive outcomes of evaluations and feedback, many teachers still perceive that the feedback systems their schools employ do not foster the development of better teaching practices. International data show that more than half of teachers report that the appraisal and feedback systems at their schools are mostly used simply to fulfil administrative requirements. Implying that the feedback does not motivate or drive performance, less than 40% of teachers report that the best-performing teachers in their schools receive the greatest recognition. Only 27% of teachers report that teachers would be dismissed for consistently underperforming (OECD, 2014a, 2014b).

**Figure 5.3 Outcomes of teacher feedback**

Percentage of lower secondary teachers who report a “moderate” or “high” positive change in the following issues, after they received feedback on their work at their school



Items are ranked in descending order within categories, based on the percentage of teachers reporting  
 Source: OECD (2013a), TALIS: 2013 complete database, [http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?datasetcode=talis\\_2013%20](http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?datasetcode=talis_2013%20).  
 StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933691135>

### The future of feedback

In the face of these possible challenges to motivation, how can we keep outcomes and attitudes high as we move into the future? Using video observations and new platforms such as professional learning communities (PLCs), have the potential to help teachers get the most out of feedback.

While teachers commonly receive feedback via classroom observations (as we saw in Figure 5.2), video observations are increasingly being used to help teachers reflect upon and improve their teaching. Video observations can be conducted quickly and at any time by individual teachers, as part of a peer learning exercise, or by school leaders as part of regular teaching observations. A recent Harvard University study, “The Best Foot Forward Project” (Kane, 2015), found that video observations help teachers critique themselves, especially in terms of time management and questioning.

In today’s digitally savvy world, PLCs, such as Twitter, Edmodo, LinkedIn and Facebook, allow teachers to connect with one another in informal settings, whenever and wherever they choose. Early research into PLCs highlights the potential these

communities have to help shape teaching and learning, and how they nurture the emotional, social, and cognitive aspects of teachers' professional growth (Trust, Krutka and Carpenter, 2016).

As we look to the future, new tools, techniques and perspectives may help lead the way to better feedback for all.

## **Lessons from the field: What are practitioners saying?**

The 2017 Qudwa Global Teachers' Forum gathered a panel of three teachers with different backgrounds and experiences to discuss what good teacher feedback is and how to make it even more effective in the future. Two panellists taught in different countries – Eldijana Bjelcic, taught in Bosnia before migrating to the United States as a refugee, continued to teach in the US and is now an administrator in Colorado; Souad Belcaid, taught in the United States, Egypt and Morocco (her native country), and now teaches at a Montessori school in Massachusetts. The third panellist, Nourah Al Qubaisi, is a special education teacher in the United Arab Emirates.



### **Lesson 1: Feedback is far from universal and its emphasis varies across countries**

There are differences across countries in both how often and how teachers receive feedback on their teaching. The panellists agreed that feedback is far from universal; in fact, one panellist, Ms Bjelcic, reports not remembering ever receiving feedback at the start of her teaching career in Bosnia (see Box 5.5).

#### **Box 5.5 Impact of feedback**

Eldijana Bjelcic shared her story of how receiving constructive feedback helped her teaching. Having taught in Bosnia and the United States, Ms Bjelcic explained the magnitude of the impact the approaches in these two different countries had on her individual practice. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Bosnia had yet to incorporate observations and feedback in their teacher evaluation practices. Additionally, teaching was 100% teacher centred, very authoritarian, and everything in the classroom was created, guided and managed by teachers.

However, once in the United States, she had to alter many of these practices to adapt to their very different teaching standards. One specific challenge for her was learning how to give students a voice in their learning. However, she successfully did so because of the extraordinary feedback she received. Hearing what others saw when they observed her classroom enabled her to become a more effective teacher. As Ms Bjelcic puts it, "Feedback made me who I am today". Indeed, by the end of her second teaching year in the United States, Ms Bjelcic was a finalist for the national Sue Lehman Teacher Award.

 **Effective and relevant feedback helped me become the teacher I am today.**   
Eldijana Bjelcic, School administrator, USA



The emphasis on feedback seems to vary internationally as well, with most emphasis focusing on students' grades, and on discipline and classroom management in the United Arab Emirates, based on a poll taken during the session and on 2013 TALIS data for Abu Dhabi. Teachers across all TALIS countries (OECD, 2014a), however, report that feedback is more balanced between student grades, classroom management and teachers' knowledge of their subjects.

## Lesson 2: Impactful feedback can come from different sources

There are different sources of feedback and if given effectively, all types of feedback can help improve teaching. When receiving feedback, what matters is how informative and constructive the feedback is. Ms Belcaid most values the feedback she received from a school principal (see Box 5.6), while Ms Bjelcic favours feedback received from her peers. Ms Belcaid and Ms Al Qubaisi also feel that feedback from students can be effective and meaningful, as students can give insights into which techniques or methods employed by teachers helped the students the most and which were less effective.

### Box 5.6 **The power of an authentic observation with specific recommendations**

For Souad Belcaid, the feedback that has had the greatest impact on her teaching has been feedback received from the head of her elementary school, who was also her supervisor at the time. According to Ms Belcaid, the method of evaluation her supervisor used was particularly beneficial. Her supervisor would observe her class three times a year, and would take detailed notes. After the observation, her supervisor would go over the notes with Ms Belcaid to explain each and every observation she made and why it mattered. She would pinpoint Ms Belcaid's areas of strength and mention some areas for improvement. Such an approach was extremely helpful. However, in order for this type of detailed feedback to have real meaning, there needs to be a strong level of trust between the teacher and the evaluator. Ms Belcaid noted that while this type of formative feedback helped her become a more powerful and effective teacher, her evaluator's method was unfortunately quite rare. Once her school's administration changed, feedback was reduced to being a checklist that was used in a punitive rather than helpful way.

 **When providing feedback, don't ask teachers to be or do what he or she is not.**   
Eldijana Bjelcic, School administrator, USA

## Lesson 3: Regardless of who provides the feedback, what matters is a combination of openness, trust, authenticity, specificity and regularity

On the question of what qualities are necessary to make feedback most effective, all three panellists are remarkably aligned as to what is needed:

- **Openness:** Openness to receiving feedback is key, and this requires a change of mindset to embrace an attitude of growth.
- **Trust:** For feedback to be effective, it is important to not be afraid of it. This is easier when there is a positive working relationship between providers and recipients of feedback, when the feedback is disconnected from career evaluation, and when the recipient values and trusts the thoughts and advice of the feedback provider.
- **Authenticity:** Feedback should enable teachers to grow within the boundaries of who they are, and not ask them to be a different person. The panel agreed that if teachers are not themselves in the classroom, students will know immediately.
- **Specificity:** The most useful feedback is not about ticking checklists or about being critical of teachers, but rather it should be specific, asking teachers to work on a particular aspect of their practice, with a clear explanation as to why they should do so.
- **Regularity:** The most effective feedback occurs on a regular basis. The panel agreed that it should be every two weeks, or perhaps once a month, instead of as a once-a-year performance evaluation. The panellists also feel that feedback should be an ongoing conversation that allows for the gathering of data on performance and how to improve instruction, that helps teachers grow professionally. When it is done regularly and effectively, teachers are motivated and encouraged by feedback.

### Key action points

The panellists identified four key action points to help design better feedback mechanisms for the future:

1. **Work on changing mindsets and try to reduce the stress that teachers experience during observations.** Teachers need to feel that feedback is not aimed at criticism, but rather at helping them improve their work. Constructive feedback is only meaningful when it can help strengthen teachers' practices and give them the confidence they need.
2. **Foster evaluations by peers to reduce the stakes and the stress associated with teacher feedback.** As teachers share the same experiences, colleagues find their feedback valuable. Teachers observing other teachers and providing feedback to them can have a big impact on teaching.
3. **Set up mechanisms to involve students and parents in feedback processes.** For example, it can be helpful to use student surveys to identify teachers' areas of strength as well as potential areas for improvement.
4. **Encourage feedback as an ongoing, formative conversation that helps teachers grow professionally, rather than as a summative checklist.** Effective feedback has real value and is authentic. When teachers feel the provider of feedback is simply checking off an administrative box, the value of the input is diminished.

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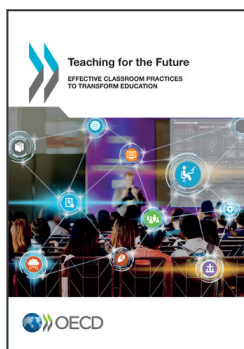
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