

How we deal with failure matters and how our students respond to emotional setbacks matters just as much. This Spotlight builds on some of the ideas in Spotlight 4 (the 'tactically grumpy' issue) where we looked at the importance of *how feedback is received* and the ideas behind *beliefs and praise*. Ideas here are taken from Alex Quigley's excellent book 'The Confident Teacher', and Ross Morrison McGill's 'Mark. Teach. Plan.'

Some thoughts on feedback and failure

- * When we deal with the fragile emotions of our students we can tend towards praise
- * Instinctively we want to protect our students from the harsh exposure of being faced with failure
- * This can compromise the process of giving accurate feedback
- * This approach can mean students develop a sense that they should avoid failure and risk at all costs

"I didn't revise for the test"
"45% is quite good when you think how hard to test was"
"I am no good at (~insert subject~)"

- * These attitudes often mean students shut down any necessity to pay proper attention to our feedback
- * If students fear of failure is managed then feedback becomes more useful
- * We need to pay attention to fostering the 'right attitude' from our students towards feedback - not an easy feat and it will take time

*"The confidence we need to cultivate in our students is that anybody can learn and improve if they invest effort and focus on the right strategies to get better"*¹

*"Making mistakes is important. It helps us to learn new things, builds our confidence and encourages us to take risks"*²

Hattie has highlighted the value of developing an environment in schools where mistakes are valued as an essential part of learning³

Strategies to strip away the stigma of failure in the classroom

My Favourite mistake: Circulate the room selecting your favourite mistake. Get students to write their own mistakes on their ipads. Use a visualizer / reflector to display mistakes for the whole class to see. Explore the misconceptions - unpick mistakes and failures and learn from them.

Finding Failure: Give students an error strewn passage, or work with mistakes in and get them to seek out the errors. Tell them they have to find the five answers that are wrong. Subtly, failure quickly becomes accepted as a natural part of learning.

Prototyping: 'a preliminary version of a product' - It is helpful to explain the notion of prototyping and how inventors learn from their failures. Our students are busy prototyping, crafting and drafting essays, sketching in art, writing UCAS PS, etc. We need to make this process visible and explicit. Get students to take photographs of their 'prototypes' and get them to explain their design process - failures and all.

Famous Failures: Every subject is littered with notable failures that led to successes. We need to bring these intriguing stories to light - failure is often a requirement on the path to success.

Bog Standard to brilliant: An issue with peer feedback is fear about what friends will think. We should model constructive feedback, consider using a poor effort of your own to make light of peer feedback. Given your model, get students to feedback on the work, scaffold their feedback and highlight when they do it well and when they don't.

Delayed marking: If you are grading work, consider just giving written comments first, asking students to engage with these, maybe even improving work, before you then give them their original grade and a (hopefully) improved one.

¹ The Confident Teacher - Alex Quigley

² Mark. Plan. Teach - Ross Morrison McGill

³ Visible Learning (2009) Hattie

Re-marking: It is interesting how rewriting / redoing a piece of work is often associated with punishment. But asking students to redo a piece of work, focusing on improving, it can be powerful, and if handled well can make students celebrate their mistakes.

Mastery Marking: This is the practice of only accepting a piece of work when it is of a specific quality. For example asking students to redraft and submit their work in order to get a top grade. If handled correctly this should encourage students to practice learning from their mistakes and also instil in them a sense of determination to produce the best piece of work they can.

Where next with feedback?

Where to look	Feedback strategy	No idea! What is this?	I do this	I know what it is but don't use it
<i>Covered in Spotlight 8: November 15</i> <i>and</i> <i>Spotlight 8 2018/19</i>	Whole class feedback			
	Live marking			
	Codes and symbols marking			
	DIRT and Individual Improvement Tasks			
<i>Covered in Spotlight 9: November 22 and T&L Briefing</i> <i>and</i> <i>Spotlight 8 2018/19</i>	Reducing the need for feedback by emphasis on careful instruction and success criteria			
	Verbal feedback			
	Peer marking and Gallery Critique			
<i>Covered in Spotlight 10 November 29</i> <i>and</i> <i>Spotlight 8 2018/19</i>	Using technology to give feedback			
	Switching the onus onto the student			
	Making every word count in my written marking			
<i>Covered in Spotlight 11 December 5</i> <i>and</i> <i>Spotlight 8 2018/19</i>	Feeding forward			
	Check-lists ahead of handing work in			
	Video feedback			

Please let me know if you have a feedback strategy you would like me to focus on in a Spotlight/Briefing

Whilst you are here - are you 'buying in' to the whole school focus on feedback?

As a result of the whole school focus on feedback, I have made small but deliberate changes to my practice which are now habits	Y	N
I regularly read the Spotlights, and they make me reflect on my classroom practice	Y	N
I have begun to think about and initiate my peer collaboration	Y	N