Feedback as a focus: Intentional Mindframes

Adam Inder and **Louise Hall,** teachers at Clarkson Community High School, Perth

Invitational Education Theory seeks to "provide a means of intentionally summoning people to realise their relatively boundless potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavour" (Purkey & Novak 2015). Such a bold task can appear daunting, but the complexity is made simple ('simplexity') through the compelling framework of Invitational Education. Embedded within the framework are five 'Elements' – areas of focus which detail what it means to have an inviting approach towards oneself and others. These elements are intentionality, care, optimism, respect and trust – often collectively abbreviated as I-CORT.

Embedding the elements of I-CORT into one's operation as a teacher may seem like common sense to some; wielding one or more of these elements within the classroom may even come naturally to you. The key behind an invitational stance is that it is most effective when it is **intentional**, which is why intentionality precedes the rest of the elements of Invitational Theory. Purkey & Novak state that "intentionality can be a tremendous asset for educators and others in the helping professions, for it is a constant reminder of what is truly important in human service" (Purkey & Novak 2015). To be 'nice' or to be 'friendly' is not what it means to be I-CORT – to take I-CORT as a simple concept rather than a 'simplex' concept can be a mistake which leads to a lack of effectiveness.

The main idea of John Hattie's research on Visible Learning is 'Know thy impact!' (Hattie 2012), which refers to teachers regularly understanding the effect they are having on students depending on their approach to teaching and learning. Ultimately, it is the combination of teachers wielding appropriate Mindframes with appropriate actions that result in improved effectiveness as a teacher.

When students are asked to name a teacher who who has had the most impact,

they typically make reference to a teacher who cared or believed in them. The presence of **care**, **optimism**, **respect** and **trust** within the classroom are precursors for learning, as indicated by positive teacher-student relationships having an effect size of 0.72, which is double the impact of the 'hinge point' effect size of 0.40 (Hattie 2012). One of Hattie's Mindframes explicitly identifies positive relationships as a positive contributor to learning, stating the Mindframe as "I engage in positive relationships" (Hattie & Zierer 2018). However, the other nine Mindframes require an underlying I-CORT approach in order to be used most effectively. An overview of the implementation of Hattie & Zierer's 10 Mindframes at Clarkson Community High School can be found at the following link: https://vimeo.com/282596679.

In Chapter 3 of John Hattie's *Visible Learning For Teachers,* he describes the beliefs and commitments of expert teachers. According to Hattie, an expert teacher creates an optimal classroom climate for learning based on **trust** (Hattie 2012). An expert teacher believes that intelligence is changeable rather than fixed, as supported by the work by Carol Dweck on

Growth Mindset (Dweck 2006). This type of mindset towards others requires high levels of **optimism** and **respect**. Overall, expert teachers' scope of influence goes beyond that of improving test scores (Hattie 2012). One could even say that the influence of an expert teacher "[summons] people to realise their relatively boundless potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavour". An expert teacher, in other words, is an invitational teacher.

In the recently published book by John Hattie & Klaus Zierer, *10 Mindframes for Visible Learning,* the authors cast a vision for the future of education:

"We, too, have a dream for developing passion in learning and developing an education system that values inviting all students come and learn, to belong, and the reinvest in their own learning. We have a dream for an education system that **develops respect for self and respect for others**…" (Hattie & Zierer 2018, p. 167)

This vision for the future of education in the most cutting-edge contemporary educational discourse describes an I-CORT system, founded on self-concept theory which is considered a foundation of Invitational Education. As

humanity delves deeper into the understanding of what it means to teach effectively as to make the learning visible, the clearer it becomes that the best teacher adopts an intentionally inviting stance.

Within the context of Clarkson Community High School, we have been exploring Hattie & Zierer's 10 Mindframes and looking at how they translate into our classroom practice. By being consciously aware of the Mindframes and the practices which help us translate theory into practice, we can become more intentional with how we wield these practices. Recently, we looked at Chapter 6, which is based on the mindframe, "**I give and help students understand feedback and I interpret and act on feedback given to me.**" As with all of the other Mindframes, it makes clear reference to the role of both the teacher and the learner. However, this Mindframe particularly fascinates me, as the roles of the teacher and the learner are very similar. In other words, the teacher is clearly identified as a learner within their own right.

As I reflect on Chapter 6 of Hattie & Zierer's *10 Mindframes*, I remember a notation from Dr Howard Hendricks which I shared with Principal John Young on my first day at Clarkson:
"I would rather have my students drink from a running stream than a stagnant pool" (Hendricks, 1996).

Stagnant pools (such as lakes or ponds) hold water for extended periods of time, but the water does not move, or moves very slowly. As a consequence, there are increased risks of pollutants building up in the water. Lakes and ponds were most commonly formed a long time ago during the Ice Age, but each one is ultimately destined to 'die' due to the increase deposition of particles that cannot be filtered out of the water.

Conversely, bodies of water which flow (such as rivers and streams) are fed water from a variety of sources (e.g. rain, melting snow and underground springs). Rivers and streams gradually cut away at the land over time, changing the landscape permanently. This impacts the flowing stream in a meaningful way because the removed land allows for a greater volume of water to flow over time.

The notation by Dr Hendricks is not *really* referring to *actual* streams and pools – it is an analogy for growth. In other words, for learners to be growing effectively they must be gleaning knowledge and wisdom from those that are growing themselves – just because we are in charge of the learning does not imply that we ourselves are exempt from learning. In the words of Goodwin & Hubbell, "It has been said that change is inevitable but growth is intentional. If this is true, then intentionality is crucial to becoming a great teacher." To continue our learning journey as teachers is an intentional act by asking the following questions of ourselves as educators and our students as learners:

- How am I going?
- Where am I going?
- Where to next?

As teachers responsible for student feedback, our approach must allow for students to both receive and understand feedback. Providing feedback for students requires 3 levels:

1 Task
- What can/can't learners do?
- Did they reach the goal or not?

2 Process
- How did students get to the goal?
- How did they work?

3 Self-regulation
- How did they self-regulate the product and the process of their learning?

It is important that we provide all levels of feedback at the level appropriate for the student. The levels "are connected and interact with each other", so we must artfully and intentionally use them in concert with each other to provide maximum impact.

Within my own teaching practice, here are examples of some strategies I use and 'spaces I create' to allow for each level of feedback:

1 Task
- Encouraging students to check answers in the back of their textbook – in other words, was their answer right or wrong?
- Linking types of questions or understandings back to success criteria displayed clearly in the classroom – 'Are you able to do this yet?'

2 Process
- Students are encouraged to ask when they identify a question they 'got wrong' when working through practice questions – this allows me to critique their process and provide feedback on how they should approach similar questions in future
- Explicit teaching model as appropriate, using the 'I do, we do, you do' to teach processes while also slowly granting independence to make mistakes and learn from them
- Homework club and my availability via email give students opportunity to ask about the required process or to critique their own process through access to my explicit teaching outside of class hours

3 Self-regulation
- As you can see above, elements of the feedback provided (and the way in which I provide feedback for the above two levels) have a level of self-regulation embedded within them
- Students were coached from the beginning of the year to use a growth mindset when approaching challenges, which has enabled them to self-regulate emotionally as well as when approaching technical problems that they need to overcome
- The use of growth mindset as an approach to managing challenges is a form of metacognition (thinking about thinking) – shown to have an effect size of 0.69 in *Visible Learning* – which allows students to regulate their approach to challenge
- The attitudes and behaviours of my classes through the implementation of growth mindset as a metacognitive strategy are starting to morph towards that described in *10 Mindframes*, becoming "very good at seeking and using feedback".

As we are teachers open to being lifelong learners ourselves, we must be open and responsive to feedback from peers, leaders and students. As Hattie & Zierer state, "Teacher-to-student feedback may be important, but learner-to-teacher feedback is just as or even more important."

There are many strategies linking to Chapter 6 currently being implemented by the Mathematics and Science Learning Areas at Clarkson Community High School. One leader of the field is Mrs Louise Hall, demonstrating a wide range of feedback styles within
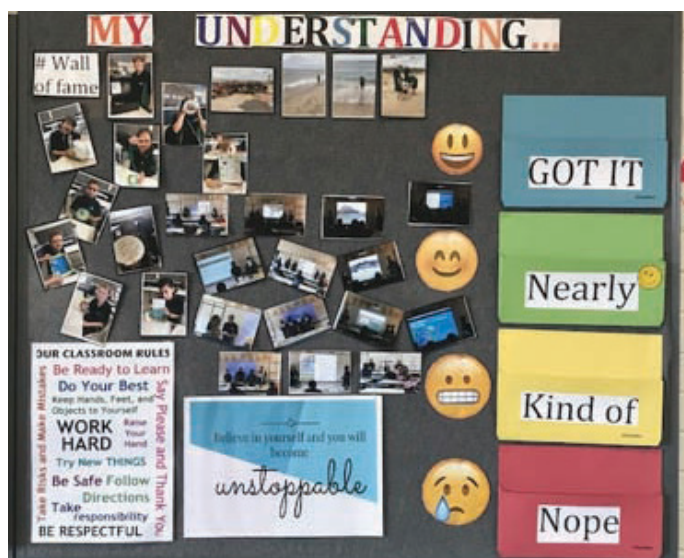
Figure 1: Student self-reflection wall chart

her classes. Some of her approaches include visible classroom displays, providing visual opportunities for students to self-regulate their own learning (as seen in Figure 1) and also assessment feedback forms, allowing students to judge their own progress based on an assessment task completed and how they can address study skills which are lacking. These feedback forms have since been taken-up across both Mathematics and Science Learning Areas.

When provided with prompt questions on the impact of her feedback strategies detailed above, Louise provided us with the following responses, linking back to the overarching vision of Invitational Theory at Clarkson CHS. Within Louise's answers (italic), you will see reference to 'I-CORT'. These elements are also referred to individually, but each decision investing in these elements in Louise's practice is shown to be intentional.

What was the evidence that shows you this strategy is working for your students?

I have asked all of the students to complete an anonymous feedback form based on the first eight weeks of the year. The feedback form and collated results are shown below:

If you use this strategy again (next week, next year…), are there any changes you would make?

I use this strategy every week and will continue to give students

a feedback form once per term. I can use the results of this feedback form to refine the exit tickets and target specific feedback styles. Also ensure that the lesson is broken down into sections that are explicit, students understand what is expected and each task is evaluated (peer, self or teacher)

Tell me about a time students showed they are gaining Trust or Optimism.

Some of the comments on the feedback forms:
"Science Rules!"
"Mrs Hall is a good teacher and tries really hard."
"Mrs Hall is a really great teacher."
"Good teacher."
"I like Mrs Hall's fun activities."

These comments represent that the students feel comfortable in the room and trust in both my ability and the fact that I care about them.

I differentiate my activities and sometimes give students the option to choose the level to work at. The amount of students challenging themselves and striving to improve has increased. They are continually optimistic about the tasks given and the content being learnt. This energy can be felt in the room. I also find that teaching to different learning strategies within a lesson and having a clear lesson plan keeps a good pace during the lesson and allows students to see their own progress. As they have now built upon this for eight weeks it is clear they believe in themselves and feel responsible for their own work ethic.

I have included a slide I used in a lesson last week (Figure 6). Students had 10 minutes (clear time-limit expectation) to write down the positives and negatives of living near a volcano.

We then swapped books to peer assess (showing respect and care for each other). The students then used this slide to mark each other's work and had to write write:

One thing you did well…
One thing to improve…

All students entered into this and were proud to share with me where they had done well and what they can do next time. This framed the progress for the lesson, showed them they had achieved something in the hour and sets an optimistic tone leaving the room.

I find activities like this have created a strong I-CORT culture within my classroom.

How do you think our school might change if all the teachers use the I-CORT elements in their classrooms?

Figure 2: Student feedback form

|	**Never**		**Sometimes**		**All the time**
Mrs Hall gives me the motivation and inspiration to learn	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like I can trust Mrs Hall	1	2	3	4	5
Mrs Hall is optimistic about my learning	1	2	3	4	5
Mrs Hall provides engaging lessons	1	2	3	4	5
I know what Mrs Hall expects from me	1	2	3	4	5
Mrs Hall provides feedback on my progress	1	2	3	4	5
I feel comfortable during lessons	1	2	3	4	5
I feel more positive in science	1	2	3	4	5
Mrs Hall shows me respect	1	2	3	4	5
Mrs Hall is willing to offer	1	2	3	4	5
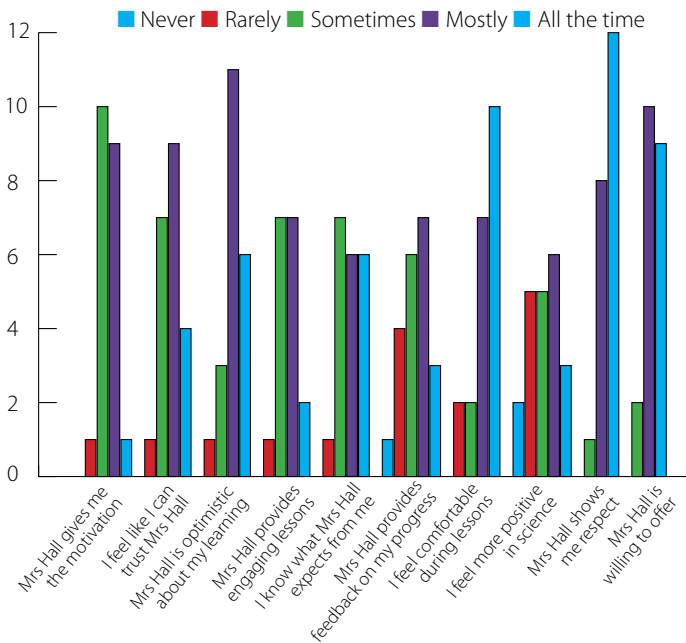
Figure 3: Year 8 Teacher Feedback Results
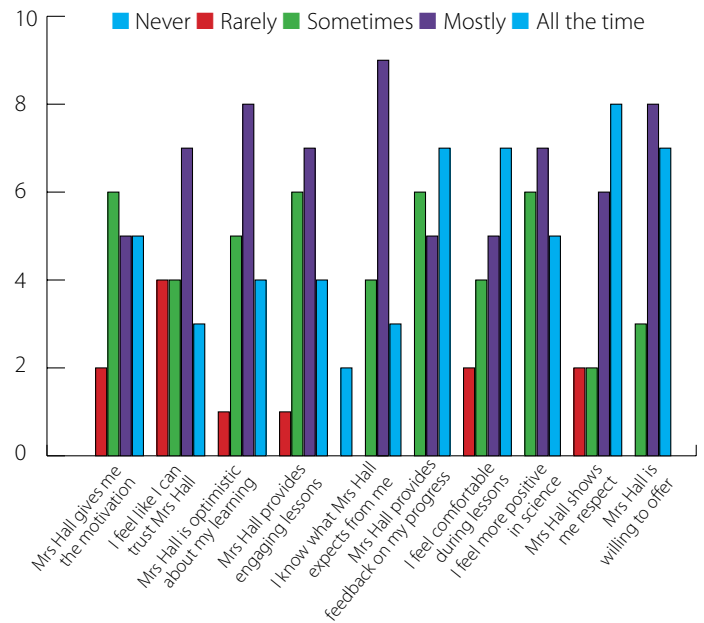
Figure 4: Year 9 Teacher Feedback Results
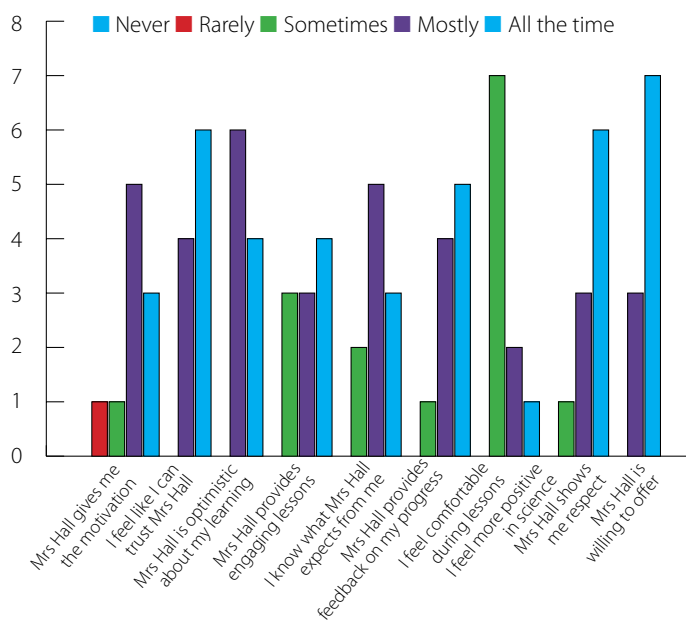
Figure 5: Year 12 Teacher Feedback Results

Figure 6: Volcanoes differentiation activity

I think the above is just a snapshot of the positive I-CORT culture that can be created. If students were going from room to room with this mentality I think it would have a positive effect on attendance, attainment and school-wide culture.

One way this can be done is through small PD meetings offering explicit teaching methods to people, hosted by other members of staff, to help everyone reflect on strengths and improve their teaching and learning.

The ideas presented in Chapter 6 with feedback as a major theme cover a wide span of theory and practice within teaching and learning. However, the strategies listed above, which are intentionally implemented, aim to develop staff efficacy in the areas discussed which detail extremely high impacts towards making learning visible.

The work undertaken by Louise at a classroom level resonates with Clarkson Community High School's 'Teach the Teacher' program, a school-wide student voice project adapted from the work done at Mount Waverley Secondary College in Victoria. Information about the program can be found at the following link: http://www.clarksonchs.wa.edu.au/index.php/news-1/principal-1/347-student-voice-teach-the-teacher.

References

Dweck, CS 2006, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, Random House.

Hattie, J 2012, *Visible learning for teachers: Maximising impact on learning*, Routledge, London and New York.

Hattie, J & Zierer, K 2018, *Ten Mindframes for Visible Learning: Teaching for Success*, Routledge.

Hendricks, H 1996, *Teaching to Change Lives: Seven Proven Ways to Make Your Teaching Come Alive*, Multnomah Books.

Purkey, WW & Novak, JM 2015, 'An Introduction to Invitational Theory', *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 5–15.