

Supporting Distanced Teaching and Learning Through Feedback that Feeds Forward A 4-part Series by Amy Tepper & Patrick Flynn

Part 2: Seeing the Shift as a Progression

Change is upon us, to say the least. Generally, with change of any size or magnitude, we experience a cycle. We move through stages, sometimes forward into feeling hopeful, sometimes backwards into fear or anxiety, and then forward again into productive. You could probably already chart the phases you have experienced socially, emotionally, and physically in the past few weeks and months. As we work to shift teaching and learning to virtual environments, we recognize that everyone—our students and staff—is moving through stages of a change cycle, but also through a progression of teaching and learning. They will require varying levels of support. Excellent resources are available from organizations who have identified stages for virtual implementation due to school closures, especially for teachers in the use of technology. (We recommend several in our suggested readings at the end of this document).

The goal in the creation of our progression was to ensure anyone who *supports* teachers (leaders, coaches, and peers), could continue to provide feedback in the new environment. We also wanted to create a tool that would allow for teacher self-reflection. We have reimagined our strategies and tools that we provide in our books *Feedback to Feed Forward* and *Learner-Focused Feedback*, and remain true to our goals—to ensure you can always provide high quality feedback for growth. You can enable and empower students and teachers to shift successfully into new environments during these challenging times and ensure they are supported to the highest levels based on strengths and needs.

Teachers are already seeing the significant benefit and freedom of providing feedback to students (without grades in many cases). Several have shared how quickly and noticeably student engagement has improved because of it, even though their students are experiencing significant change and stress. We expect this is happening because the feedback is formative, personalized, builds connections between students and teachers, and students can more readily answer the key questions:

Where am I going?
How am I going?
What's next? (Hattie & Timperley, 2007)

When we remove grades, feedback can be focused on improvement and growth. Can't we apply this same thinking to feedback that can be provided to teachers in this time of need? With states waiving teacher evaluations, new forms of "observation" and feedback become anytime, anywhere opportunities for support and growth, just as the learning has become for our students.

Our Stages of Online Teaching and Learning

Based on our ongoing surveys of teachers and leaders, our research and writing, our teaching and coaching experience, and Boettcher & Conrad's (2016) "Four Phases of a Course," we have identified a progression of **4 Stages of a Shift from Traditional to Online Teaching and Learning**, representing varying levels of learner and teacher behaviors, actions, and needs:

- Stage 1: Meeting Basic Needs**
- Stage 2: Adapting the Learning**
- Stage 3: Gauging the Learning**
- Stage 4: Analyzing the Impact**

It is important to remember that our stages are not meant to become labels or boxes into which learners or teachers definitively fit. Change is fluid and, in such an unprecedented time, unpredictable. So consider our tools to be a guide versus a script. We have not attached a timeline or number of days/weeks that learners or teachers might remain in each stage. Starting points should always be based on the questions: Are students **okay**? Then are they cognitively engaged and learning? Why or why not? Are your teachers **okay**? Are they able to successfully teach? Why or why not?

You may find a situation wherein a teachers' actions align to Stage 3, so they could begin to practice strategies in Stage 4. Or perhaps you find most students' behaviors and actions in a class align with Stage 3, but a teacher's practices and needs require support in alignment with Stage 1 or 2. These are reasonable and appropriate. It is also important to know that learner or teacher family dynamics or situations can change in a moment, meaning we would need to suddenly address priorities in Stage 1. The key is to focus on meeting learners and teachers where they are.

In our full table outlining the progression (Figure 2.1), we identify potential learner and teacher actions for each stage along with several applicable standards that align to aspirational online teaching and learning. We offer the standards for some guidance, as we have always asserted that supporting teachers using standards is not solely for evaluation. It allows you to ground feedback in a shared vision of effective teaching and learning with common language, which helps teachers clearly see where they are headed. We have referenced selected standards from the following:

[NSQ Standards for Quality Online Teaching](#)

Checklist for Online Interactive Learning (COIL)¹

[CCT](#) (Connecticut Common Core of Teaching, 2017 as we are based in CT)

Danielson's Framework (2013)

EdAdvance's 6 Six Critical Skills (Costa, 2012 offers us a crosswalk of ISTE/NETS, NcREL/EnGauge standards, & P21 21st c. skills²)

We also provide suggested actions for a leader, coach, or peer in support of learners and teachers in each stage in alignment with those standards. Please note, our lists are not meant to be exhaustive, but can provide you with a strong foundation for your support of your teachers and students, and, ultimately, to continue to cultivate a culture of learning (Part 4 of our series).

Our Progression as a Supportive Tool

We envision that our table of the progression can be utilized in several ways. For...

a big picture view of an aspirational progression/common vision for learning (Where am I going?)
self-reflection on existing practice and to identify strategies to bridge or progress through each of the stages (How am I going?)

a common framework for aligning and providing support, feedback, and ongoing professional learning and to identify entry points or high leverage focus areas to move learning forward (What's next?)

development of systems for routine examination of student achievement (What's next 2.0?)

¹ Sunal, Sunal, Odell, & Sundberg, 2003; recommended by Tobin, 2004

² A crosswalk between standards from enGauge 21st Century Skills (2003) by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory and the Metiri Group, International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)/ National Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for Students (NETS•S) <https://www.iste.org/standards>, & Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), www.21stcenturyskills.org (now Battelle for Kids)



FIGURE 2.1: 4 STAGES OF A SHIFT FROM TRADITIONAL TO DISTANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING

STAGE 1: MEETING BASIC NEEDS



At the outset or at any point this year, learners may be nervous or stressed and Maslow's needs may not be met. They are in need of connections, relationships, and consistency. Learners or their families may be uncertain and unfamiliar about expectations and tools. Teachers may be uncertain or unfamiliar with basic requirements of shifting to online teaching: use of technology, time, and establishing expectations. They too may be nervous or stressed.

STAGE 2: ADAPTING THE LEARNING



Learners, families, and teachers are settling into routines and comfort levels are increasing. As a result, expectations in learning and use of technology are being adapted. Learners understand and are following schedules, building skills and dispositions to begin to create their own schedules, routines, and tools. There may be varying levels of student motivation, success and engagement, and completion of tasks with varying levels of teacher success in responding to student needs as they arise or to increase engagement.

STAGE 3: GAUGING THE LEARNING



Learners are becoming more independent and engaging more deeply and consistently at developmentally, socially, and academically appropriate levels (which includes factors like access or equity), generally moving forward in their learning. Learners are becoming more reflective about their own learning and needs and demonstrating greater capacity for metacognition and self-regulation. Teachers are able to invest more time in planning and are purposefully trying new tools and resources (proactive), finding effective ways to scaffold, and becoming more proficient in use of tools and resources to make adjustments (react in real time).

STAGE 4: ANALYZING THE IMPACT



Most learners are cognitively engaged at developmentally, socially, and academically appropriate levels, becoming assessment-capable learners who own their learning, but there is always room for all students to be further challenged or further supported. Teachers are highly reflective about their teaching and learning and may be comfortable self-assessing the effectiveness of tech tools in meeting their own and their learners' needs. They are analyzing tasks and the outcomes of virtual instruction to identify their impact and to continuously advance student learning. In Inquiry Team/PLC meetings, teachers are routinely analyzing impact and high leverage strategies and tools. They are also identifying students who may require further support or enrichment and are working together for solutions.

To maximize the impact of the use of our progression and resources, collaborative reflection and sharing of resources needs to occur throughout the stages, which can increase in frequency and effectiveness. Ideally, in the near future (or when you have a definitive understanding of duration), it is important to find time with your staff to develop a common vision of the teaching and learning you hope to achieve during these changing times, if you have not already done so. As a first step for using our tools, leaders, coaches, and peers can create and review surveys, ask questions and listen, and jump into virtual classrooms, chats, or meets. These actions will allow for an identification of needs and starting points that can lead to individualized support for each student and/or teacher. (Specific strategies for gathering information about teaching and learning will be provided in Part 3.)

Suggested Reading:

Further exploration into any of the referenced frameworks on page 2

Learner-Focused Feedback: 19 Strategies to Observe for Impact (2020), Tepper and Flynn

Understanding how learners learn p. 48-60

[QM Emergency Remote Instruction Checklist](#) and [QM K-12 Online Teaching Rubric](#)

Digital Learning for All (2012), Jonathan Costa

Using Personal Interest Projects to Encourage Students To Think, Solve, Create, Reflect and Learn

<https://edadvance.org/schools-districts/skills21>

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