

STUDENTS WHO SEEK ADVICE — AND ACT ON IT

How to teach students to act on advice and drive their own learning.



“

A superb book,
and among the
best on feedback.”

—
John Hattie

world-renowned education
researcher

An introduction to the ideas in
**From Feedback to Advice: Developing
Students Who Seek Advice and Act on It**

James Anderson (Amba Press, 2026)

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**Your feedback
isn't the problem.
Students haven't
yet learned to be
partners in the
feedback process.**

The feedback frustration your teachers know

Walk through your school in any given week and you'll find teachers pouring hours into feedback. Specific suggestions. Areas to work on. Something to celebrate. Then the work goes back, and most students glance at the mark, scroll past the comments, and move on. Maybe one small change. Rarely a second thought.

Every teacher knows this frustration. And here's what matters: it isn't a sign that the feedback is poor. Your teachers already know what good feedback looks like: timely, specific, actionable, focused on the task rather than the person, tied to clear success criteria. They do that work, and they do it well.

The disconnect is somewhere else. All that careful guidance is landing on students who haven't learned how to use it, who can't yet name their own gaps or ask for the help that would actually make a difference.



Why the guidance doesn't land

So why doesn't all that careful guidance land? Your teachers already do that part well. The problem is that the feedback arrives uninvited, and when feedback is done *to* students rather than *with* them, four barriers get in the way.

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They’re not looking for evaluation — they get that from the mark. They’re looking for a roadmap.

When feedback arrives uninvited, four barriers get in the way:



Absence of ownership

feedback is done *to* them, not *with* them. There’s no reason to pick up guidance you didn’t ask for.



Emotional interference

uninvited comments land as judgement, triggering defensiveness instead of growth.



Cognitive overload

too many comments at once, and students don’t know where to begin.



Lack of translation skills

students can’t turn “needs better analysis” into a concrete next step.

The shift that changes everything

The word feedback has become part of the problem. Think about your own reaction when someone says, “Can I give you some feedback?” You brace. Out in the wider culture — performance reviews, comment cards, 360 surveys — the word has come to mean backward-looking judgement. Students hear it and brace too, however good the guidance actually is.

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**Feedback finishes.
Advice advances.**

Feedback, as the culture now hears it, looks backward. It judges what was done and closes the conversation. Advice looks forward. It guides the next step and opens the door.

This isn’t semantics. When teachers give feedback, students wait for judgement. When students seek advice, they take control. Change the word, and you change the student’s relationship to it.

And the shift goes deeper than language — it dissolves all four barriers at once. When a student asks, “What advice would help me make my argument stronger?”, the question narrows the response, so there’s no overload. Framing the goal does the translating up front, so the advice arrives already targeted. You can’t feel judged by an answer you asked for. And asking is itself a commitment to act on it. One move, all four barriers.



You've been improving only half the equation

For decades, schools have worked to improve teaching, refining pedagogy, identifying high-impact strategies, investing in professional learning. That work matters, and your teachers are more skilful at giving feedback than ever. But growth depends on both sides of a simple equation:

$$\text{Growth} = \text{Skilful Teaching} \times \text{Skilful Learning}$$

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The world's best teaching multiplied by unskilful learning still equals limited growth.

The world's best teaching multiplied by unskilful learning still equals limited growth. We've spent years teaching teachers how to teach, and far less time teaching students how to learn. And that's the opportunity we keep walking past: all the skill your teachers have built in giving feedback is landing on students who were never taught how to use it. Teach the other half of the equation, and that skill finally lands where it can do its work.

That capacity — getting better at getting better — is what the book calls learnership. Feedback is one of the places it's built.

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How can students learn to drive their own learning if they're always passengers?

From passengers to drivers

So the work now is helping students become active seekers of advice: students who can name what they're working on, gather the evidence, and ask for exactly the help they need. More feedback won't get you there, and neither will better-written feedback.

For school leaders. You've invested years building your teachers' skill at giving feedback. This is what makes that investment more powerful: skilful guidance finally landing on students who are able to act on it.

The answer isn't better feedback. It's better feedback seekers.

The feedback process — and who owns it

Effective feedback follows a cycle: seven components that connect a learning focus to real improvement. The insight at the heart of the book is that students can gradually take ownership of each one, moving from teacher-directed to student-directed learning.



The seven components form a continuous repeating cycle of improvement. Every component is a place where responsibility can shift from teacher to student.

Six teacher practices that shift who's in charge

That shift doesn't happen by accident, and you can't build it with a motivational speech. It happens through six progressive practices. At each one, the same question gets asked: who's in charge of this part of the cycle right now? Level by level, the answer moves from teacher to student, until students are driving their own feedback and seeking advice on their terms. Agency like this is built, not handed over.

Teacher practice	Teacher's role	Student's role	Feedback relationship
 Give Feedback	Directing <i>I tell, you do</i>	Complying <i>You tell, I do</i>	Dependence
 Model the Feedback Process	Demonstrating <i>I show how it works</i>	Observing <i>You show me, I notice</i>	Awareness
 Frame Advice Options	Guiding <i>You choose from my options</i>	Selecting <i>I choose from your options</i>	Participation
 Co-develop Advice	Partnering <i>I work with you</i>	Contributing <i>You work with me</i>	Collaboration
 Support Advice-Seeking	Supporting <i>You lead, I support</i>	Directing <i>I lead, you support</i>	Leadership
 Consult as Expert	Consulting <i>You drive, I consult</i>	Tailoring <i>I drive, you consult</i>	Agency

Each practice is unpacked in the book with look-fors, teacher language, and classroom routines.



Five strategies that grow with your students

Across all six levels, five core strategies do the work. These aren't add-ons: they're the same five tools from Foundation to Year 12, and what changes is who holds responsibility and how sophisticated the thinking becomes. A Partner Check in Year 2 and a Partner Check in Year 11 share a structure; the thinking behind it grows.



Teacher Prompts

strategic language that gradually shifts responsibility to the student.



T-Charts

making the difference between helpful and unhelpful advice-seeking visible.



Partner Checks

students check their readiness with a peer before coming to the teacher.



Advice Menus

structured choice that builds real decision-making.



Pre-conversation Forms

preparation that reshapes the conversation before it starts.



**The same five tools,
Foundation to Year
12. What changes
is who holds the
thinking.**

Each one starts simple and grows more sophisticated as students take on more of the feedback process. It's the same tool, but the student carries a bigger share of the thinking.

Powerful in principle. But how do you run a Partner Check in a Year 2 classroom, or a Year 11 one? What does an Advice Menu look like in science versus history? How do you know a student is ready for the next level? That's where the book goes.

This is how you develop students who take charge of the process — students who seek advice, act on it, and drive their own learning. And it's how you multiply the impact of every teacher you have: the same skilful feedback, now landing on students ready to use it.

FROM FEEDBACK TO ADVICE

Developing Students Who Seek Advice and Act on It

James Anderson (Amba Press, 2026)

Develop students who drive their own learning.

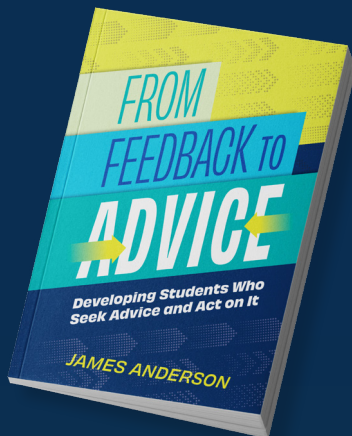
The complete, practical version of everything in these pages:

- The full six-level progression, level by level, with look-fors, teacher language, and readiness indicators.
- The strategy toolkit: the five core strategies (and more), with classroom-ready examples across every subject and year level.
- A student-led feedback diagnostic to find where your students actually sit.
- Forms and templates ready to use.
- The research foundations behind the approach.

One shared language, Foundation to Year 12. Students who seek advice, act on it, and take charge of their own learning.

For a school, it's more than a book.

It's a shared language and a common pathway from Foundation to Year 12, so students meet a coherent approach in every classroom, and so the skill your teachers have already built finally does its work.



Get the book

 www.jamesanderson.com.au/f2a

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Rarely does a professional book combine conceptual clarity, research depth, and immediate classroom usability so effectively.”

John Hattie

world-renowned education researcher



James Anderson

James Anderson, Speaker | Author | Educator © 2026