Great Teaching Toolkit
Personalised Professional Development

Student surveys

Can student surveys provide useful feedback for teacher learning?

Students have more collective experience of the classroom environment and teaching practices than anyone else. When asked the right questions, in the right way, student perceptions can be harnessed to offer an important source of information on pedagogical practices and the classroom environment. In turn, the feedback they generate can be a powerful tool for teacher learning, offering additional insight that allows teachers and leaders to personalise professional development.

We felt there was sufficient evidence for the validity of student surveys to create our own for inclusion as part of the Great Teaching Toolkit. Furthermore, it was impossible to ignore the impressions and perceptions of the biggest stakeholder in teaching effectiveness—those who have spent the most amount of time with a teacher in school.

The surveys explore the level of agreement from students as to whether certain things are happening in the classroom. In no way are we seeking the biased likes and dislikes of students on how their teacher goes about their job.

Student perceptions on teaching

Professor Rob Coe and the team at Evidence Based Education developed student surveys covering each of the four dimensions from our Model for Great Teaching:

1. Understanding the content
2. Creating a supportive environment
3. Maximising opportunity to learn
4. Activating hard thinking

Student surveys are administered online. Links are generated in the Great Teaching Toolkit platform by the class teacher. When you set up a student survey, you will have an option of which version you would like to use. Currently, there are four options, each targeted at a different reading age range:
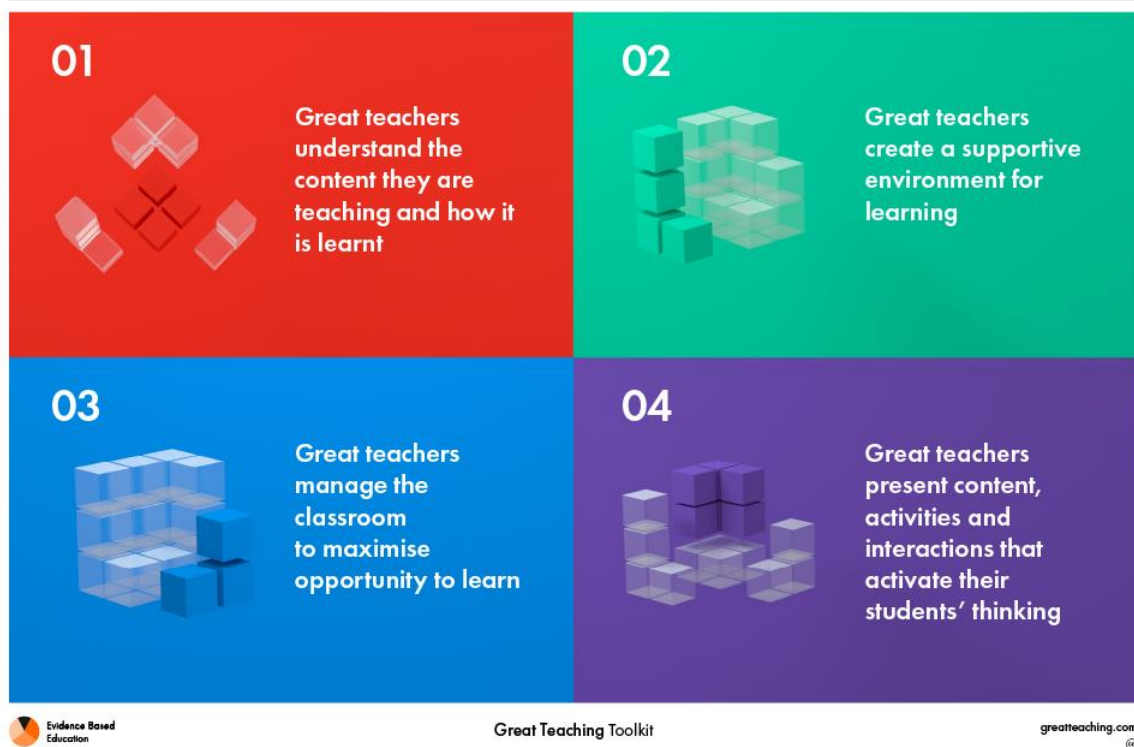
- Version B: suggested for students with a reading age of 5-7; items are both text and video.
- Version C: suggested for students with a reading age of 8-14; items are both text and video.

- Version D: suggested for students with a reading age of 11-16; items are text only.
- Version E: suggested for students in a post-16 context; questions are text only.

The Version B survey includes 25 items, covering Dimensions 2, 3, and 4 of our Model for Great Teaching. Versions C, D and E are more detailed than Version B and cover all four Dimensions.

Teachers can choose to cover all Dimensions within one survey or can choose just one of these areas to focus on at a time. There are also shorter versions that focus in on a single Element of our Model for Great Teaching available in Version C and D.

A Model for **Great Teaching**

01 Great teachers understand the content they are teaching and how it is learnt

02 Great teachers create a supportive environment for learning

03 Great teachers manage the classroom to maximise opportunity to learn

04 Great teachers present content, activities and interactions that activate their students' thinking

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Versions B and C have accompanying videos to increase the accessibility of the survey and the items. A teacher can play the video for the whole class at once, or each student can individually watch and listen on their own device.

Following a brief introduction, students are presented with various statements. All survey versions use multiple-choice responses to gauge students' perceptions of what happens in their class. In all versions, students' responses are recorded online and each student will need their own device.

Below are some example items.

Version B items

Version C video

4 → My teacher helps us to see the links between lessons and real-world events or news *

A Agree strongly

B Agree

C No opinion

D Disagree

E Disagree strongly

OK ✓

Version C, D and E text

8 → Before teaching a new topic or idea, my teacher checks that all pupils understand and remember the previous work that it builds on *

A Agree strongly
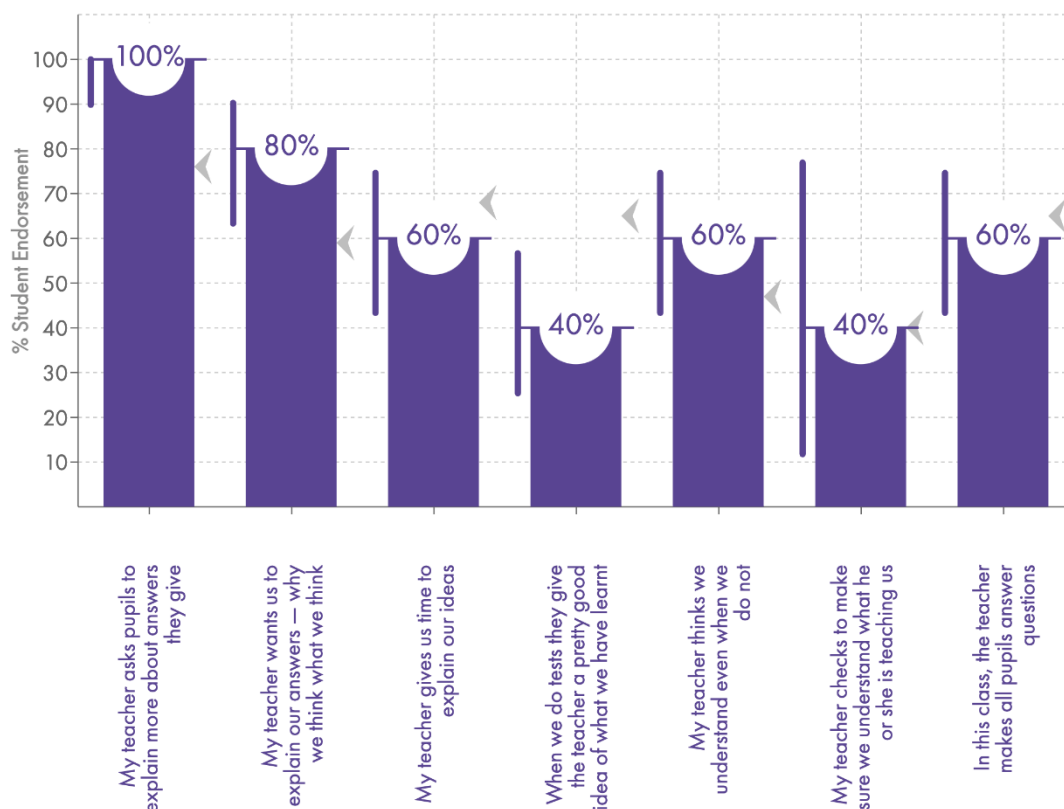
B Agree

C No opinion

D Disagree

E Disagree strongly
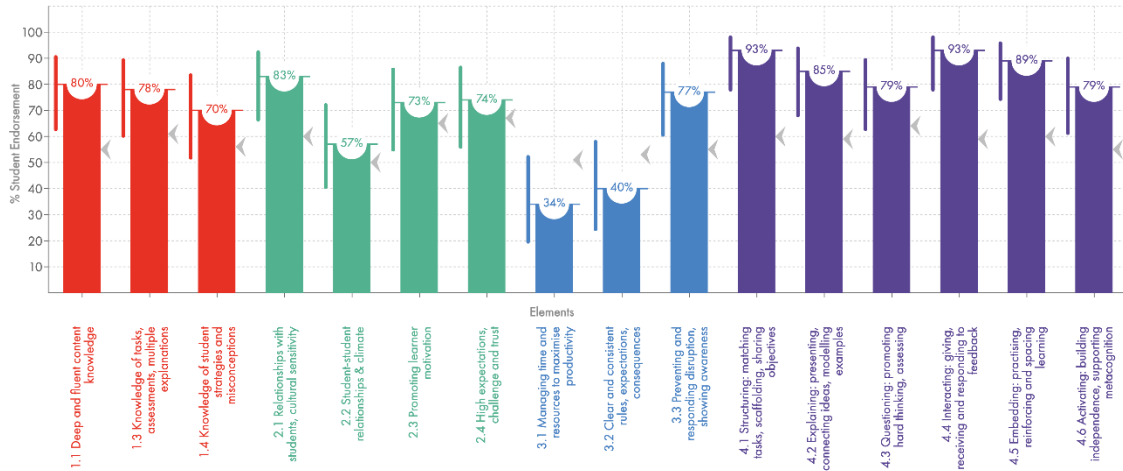
OK ✓

Feedback for Great Teaching

The results from the student surveys are always aggregated—you will not know how individual students responded. The feedback is confidential to the teacher and can only be accessed through your own, private account. Anonymised and aggregated school-wide reporting is available to school Coordinators to help understand more about the school climate, identify Great Teaching and inform development priorities. Similarly, Group Admin accounts can view aggregated results from each school in their group or trust.

The image below is an example of feedback from a student survey relating specifically to Element 4.3 (Questioning) of our Model for Great Teaching. It shows the proportion of student endorsement for each statement. A grey arrowhead points to the mean percentage endorsement for all students who have completed the survey, from all teachers and schools in our sample, for comparison.

The next image is an example of feedback from a student survey covering all four Dimensions of our Model for Great Teaching. It shows the proportion of student endorsement for each Element. Again, a grey arrowhead points to the mean percentage

endorsement for all students who have completed the survey as a useful point of reference.

The strong, overarching goal with feedback from the student surveys is to provide information to the teacher to help inform their professional learning. The feedback provides additional insight that indicates strengths and areas to consider as possible development priorities.