Why Use Quality Feedback to Guide Professional Learning? 1

I wonder how many children's lives might be saved if we educators disclosed what we know to each other.

—Roland S. Barth

In reflecting on the quote above and taken in a lighter sense, we wonder how much student achievement and student learning would increase if educators used frequent and direct quality feedback to disclose what they know to each other. This question has become the driving force of our professional work with teachers and instructional leaders, and in this book we hope to share ways of creating opportunities to offer teachers quality feedback within the professional development structure already in place in your school or district. Creating a systematic approach to feedback within a framework to guide professional learning using a collaborative process is key. We believe in sharing and collaborating with our team of instructional leaders with the goal of supporting teachers and increasing student learning.

OUR JOURNEY TOWARD QUALITY FEEDBACK

In this age of global competitiveness and College and Career Readiness Standards, as well as the ensuing changes to teacher evaluation, classroom teachers are feeling greater pressure than ever before. Instructional leaders

who are in roles meant to support teachers (e.g., principals, administrators, instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and mentors) must shoulder this burden with and for teachers. One way to accomplish this is to design professional learning experiences that maximize teachers' potential and create space for teacher learning to transfer into classroom practice, thereby increasing student learning. There is no better way to know this transfer takes place than to provide supportive follow-up after professional learning experiences and providing feedback on teacher practice (e.g., through observations and videotaping) and teacher work (e.g., on teacher-created assessments and by conducting student interviews). While we suggest structures for instructional leaders to incorporate feedback, we must also point out that we expect feedback in return from teachers. Feedback is seen as a give-and-take, and not something *done* to teachers. Feedback is *invited* from teachers, and teachers are asked about what resonates with their practice after feedback is offered. In essence, feedback should be structured so that it sparks success in people and comes full circle between instructional leaders and teachers, creating a continuous cycle of improvement for all involved. This is the kind of professional learning we describe in this book and the kind of professional learning that has a powerful impact on strengthening teacher practice and ultimately increasing student achievement. Our hope is that instructional leaders are able to envision how the ideas presented in this book can fit seamlessly into the initiatives already in place in their schools, districts, and states.

We share our experiences working with instructional leaders and teachers and make the case that one of the most effective ways to support teachers as they improve the caliber of their instruction is through quality feedback. Over the years, we have created a framework to guide professional learning that incorporates the use of feedback. Our professional collaborative work spans a dozen years, as we have conducted studies in the areas of professional learning, formative assessment, teacher reflection, and feedback and have presented extensively on these topics at the local, regional, state, and national level. We have created and provided professional learning experiences for our district as well as our regional consortium (covering 12 school districts in South Carolina). We say all this to demonstrate that we are uniquely qualified to write to an audience of instructional leaders, as we are current practitioners and know what instructional leaders need to support their teachers. As practically perpetual graduate students, we also have the theory and research to support the proposed practices and structures in the book.

Since we share our experiences throughout the book, we think it is important for the reader to know who we are. We weave anecdotes into the

research and suggest strategies in order to achieve a narrative feel and a more enjoyable reading experience. Given our history of collaboration, we often use the collective pronoun "we." However, we do, at times, shift into sections for anecdotal stories we've labeled "Administrator's Turn," told from Shawn's perspective, and "Coach's Turn," told from Abbey's perspective. In order to reflect our belief in the cyclical nature of quality feedback and the power of honoring teacher voice, which we discuss at length in Chapter 2, we have also interwoven "Teacher's Turn" anecdotes throughout Chapters 3 through 9.

ADMINISTRATOR'S TURN

Truth: I never wanted to be an educator. In fact, I did everything in my power not to go down that path. Eventually, I was forced to confront the fact that being an educator is exactly what I should be doing. I was hired for my first administrative position as Assistant Principal at Saluda Middle School in 2001. Three years later, I was named Principal of Saluda Middle School. In order to gain understanding about my stealth focus and motivation to promote excellence in our teachers and students, I felt compelled to eventually share some personal stories about my background with teachers. I decided to release the secret that some of my past mistakes included dropping out of high school not once, but twice. I think my fellow educators found it hard to believe that I went from a cocktail waitress and bartender with a GED to a principal with several graduate degrees. I told anecdotes about how I didn't think my teachers cared if I attended school and how they certainly didn't seem to bother trying to engage me with creative and meaningful lessons. I vowed never to let any students I worked with feel that they didn't matter or become so bored in school that they didn't want to be there. I also shared how I came to realize as an adult that the only way for me to make better choices in life, as far as my career was concerned, was to get an education. My passion as an educator stems from my past experiences and making a promise to myself. I vowed to make it known to fellow educators and students that I would do whatever it takes to get them to value and improve education. Probably due to my assertiveness and "no excuses" mentality, certainly not every teacher liked me on a personal level, but I felt they respected me as an educator and advocate for students. Even if some teachers were not immediately accepting of my feedback, the majority of them trusted my intentions and knew that I would not steer them wrong when it came to increasing student learning and achieving success as a school community.

COACH'S TURN

I was an English literature major who was coerced into education by a well-intentioned academic adviser who asked me how I planned to make an income upon college graduation. Little did I know that I was being advised to train for one of the most difficult professions out there. I completed my bachelor's degree in education in a state that had very few open teaching positions. I decided to relocate to the Southeastern United States because I had heard that there was a dearth of teachers. I moved and was hired by Shawn to teach eighth grade English language arts two weeks before the school year began. I was wildly unprepared to teach rural middle school students, but I was also wildly optimistic (i.e., naive). However, I was passionate about books and writing and could not wait to share all I knew with teenagers.

The teaching profession is unique because a novice teacher learns so much while already on the job. After teaching for three years, I began looking into graduate programs in order to truly develop my craft. I found a master's of education program that appealed to my interests at a nearby major university. After three semesters of coursework focusing on literacy, the position of literacy coach became available at the school. I applied for and got the job. I was granted permission to continue to teach one block of English, which worked well for me both personally (I wasn't ready to fully leave the classroom) and professionally (I garnered credibility with my colleagues because I was still in the trenches). As literacy coach at the middle school level, and then as instructional coach at the middle and high school levels a few years later, I continued to work closely with Shawn as we designed and implemented professional learning experiences for the educators with whom we worked.
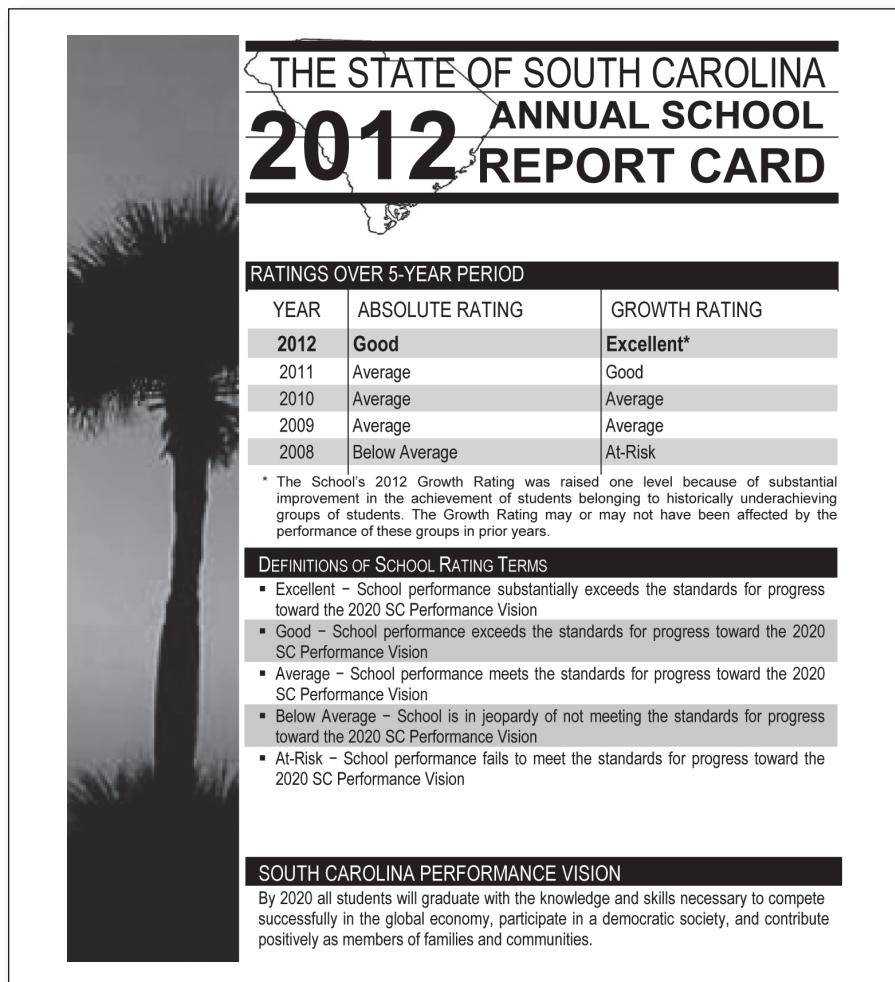
MEASURABLE RESULTS: IMPACT DATA

We worked well together to help the students and teachers we served during our 14 years in the district to achieve success. To provide context for our work, we want to share not just anecdotal notes and artifacts but also some measurable data based on student achievement.

According to the 2010 US Census, Saluda County had 19,875 residents. Saluda County Schools is a rural district that serves about 2,100 students in its schools. There is one primary school, two elementary schools, a middle and high school that share one campus, and an alternative school. Saluda Middle School serves students in grades six through eight, and the student body averaged 460 during our time there. In

2011–2012, approximately 50% of students were white, 35% were African American, and 15% were Latino. Saluda County has one of the largest and fastest-growing Latino populations in the state of South Carolina. Other student groups consisted of special education students (15%), gifted and talented students (14%), and English Language Learners (12%). Sixty percent of the student body qualified for subsidized meals.

The state of South Carolina issues state report cards annually for accountability purposes. As shown in Figure 1.1, the progress made between 2008 and 2012 is significant. Two ratings are given for schools and districts in South Carolina. Absolute performance refers to the rating a school will receive based on the percentage of students meeting standard on the state's standards-based assessment. Growth refers to

Figure 1.1 Saluda Middle School 2012 Annual School Report Card Rating

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

2012 ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT CARD

RATINGS OVER 5-YEAR PERIOD

YEAR	ABSOLUTE RATING	GROWTH RATING
2012	**Good**	**Excellent***
2011	Average	Good
2010	Average	Average
2009	Average	Average
2008	Below Average	At-Risk

* The School's 2012 Growth Rating was raised one level because of substantial improvement in the achievement of students belonging to historically underachieving groups of students. The Growth Rating may or may not have been affected by the performance of these groups in prior years.

DEFINITIONS OF SCHOOL RATING TERMS

- Excellent − School performance substantially exceeds the standards for progress toward the 2020 SC Performance Vision
- Good − School performance exceeds the standards for progress toward the 2020 SC Performance Vision
- Average − School performance meets the standards for progress toward the 2020 SC Performance Vision
- Below Average − School is in jeopardy of not meeting the standards for progress toward the 2020 SC Performance Vision
- At-Risk − School performance fails to meet the standards for progress toward the 2020 SC Performance Vision

SOUTH CAROLINA PERFORMANCE VISION

By 2020 all students will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete successfully in the global economy, participate in a democratic society, and contribute positively as members of families and communities.

the rating a school will receive based on longitudinally matched student data comparing current performance to the previous year's performance for the purpose of determining student academic growth (SC Education Oversight Committee, 2011).

As an aside, the report card ratings for Saluda Middle School the four years prior to 2008 were either in the below average or at-risk categories every year. After we figured out that what we were doing was not getting optimal results despite that fact that our faculty was working hard, our leadership skills really surfaced around 2008. We started implementing the types of learning engagements focused on feedback presented in this guide consistently and with fidelity.

In addition to having state accountability, Saluda County Schools was the sole school district in the state of South Carolina to make adequate yearly progress (AYP), and Saluda Middle School also achieved AYP in 2011 by meeting 29 out of 29 objectives. The objectives included student performance, student attendance, and participation in the state testing program. As required by the US Department of Education, AYP specifies that the statewide target be met for "all students" and for the following subgroups: racial/ethnic, subsidized meals, disability, and limited English proficiency in the areas of English language arts and mathematics. In 2011, the number of objectives to meet for middle schools in the state of South Carolina ranged from a high of 33 to a low of nine. Of the eight middle schools with 33 objectives, two met 31 objectives (the highest number met), and one met 25 objectives (the lowest number met). In Saluda Middle School's district, there were 29 schools with 29 objectives. Of those schools, only Saluda Middle School met all 29 objectives. Two schools met 27 of 29 objectives, the next highest number after Saluda Middle School.

The South Carolina Department of Education was granted a waiver in July 2012 from several accountability requirements of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). South Carolina was allowed to replace the former pass/fail system (schools and districts either met AYP or they didn't) with one that incorporated more of the current statewide assessments as a measure of whether a school met the target or made progress toward the target. The revised accountability measure assigns a letter grade (A through F) for schools and districts. In 2012, Saluda Middle School earned a grade of 94.4 (A) for the federal accountability score.

When you consider state standardized tests and state accountability measures, it is important to know where your state stands in regard to other states. A report published by *Education Next*, an organization sponsored by the Fordham Institute, the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and Harvard University's Program on Education and Governance,

says South Carolina has one of the most rigorous cut scores for proficiency on state tests. Peterson and Hess (2008), the authors of this report, wrote,

> Three states—Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Missouri— have established world-class standards in math and reading as the goal for all students. Every other state has established a lower-proficiency standard, and some states (for example, Georgia and Tennessee) declare most students proficient even when their performance is miles short of the NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress] standard. We share this information to highlight the point that earning an A according to South Carolina testing standards is legitimately impressive.

In no way did Saluda Middle School produce this growth and change without the absolute dedication and serious hard work of the teachers, staff, parents, and students we have been fortunate to work with during the past decade. While we have measurable impact data as demonstrated by standardized test scores and state and federal accountability ratings, the larger impact came by way of the change in culture and professionalism among the faculty and staff. In the next section, we describe how the faculty at Saluda Middle School worked toward developing authentic professional learning communities (PLCs). Through this venue, we created a framework to guide professional learning encompassing quality feedback for teachers regarding their assessments, instructional practices, and student data. While we have a lot of experience creating PLCs in our school and working within PLCs in a variety of settings, we rely heavily on the real PLC experts. Entire books and even series of books have been written about creating PLCs. We provide an overview of our experiences creating PLCs, but if you are interested in learning more, please visit our Recommended Readings section.

A NOTE ABOUT CULTURE

An element that will be important for implementing quality feedback is creating a culture that makes offering and receiving feedback an expected behavioral norm. In order to create a culture of feedback, it helps if trust is present. Feedback is complicated by the absence of trust; therefore, feedback will not afford the opportunity for changing professional practice if teachers do not trust instructional leaders (Roussin & Zimmerman, 2014). We took many steps as instructional leaders to promote a culture of open communication and trust. At Saluda Middle School, we began building

trust through the implementation of a school leadership team, which consisted of one representative from each content area (English, mathematics, special education, science, social studies, and related arts), the assistant principal, guidance counselor, and principal. Trust was further established by modeling a cycle wherein we offered feedback to our leadership team and, in turn, accepted and incorporated feedback from team members. We wanted to send a clear message that we were not just "doing feedback at" people, but instead working to create space, time, and opportunities for teachers and instructional leaders to give, receive, and reflect upon quality feedback. Cyclical feedback played a prominent role in all aspects of our PLCs and professional learning engagements schoolwide.

During the 2008–2009 school year, a consultant started working with the leadership team at Saluda Middle School. This was one of the very few times during our journey that we brought in an outside consultant. We make this statement to let the reader know up front that, as much as possible, we advocate for in-house professional development, where instructional leaders and teacher leaders become the experts for their colleagues. However, we needed help meeting the objective we set before him: to provide sustained professional development leading to the creation of what he called authentic PLCs (Venables, 2011). The consultant provided the following definition of authentic PLCs:

> When PLCs are authentic, the teacher culture of a school shifts from one of teachers working in isolation and competition to one in which teachers not only collaborate effectively but grow interdependent on each other, improving their individual and collective effect on learning. (Venables, 2011, p. 18)

This professional development model stressed the importance of a structured approach to creating a learning community through the use of protocols. For instructional leaders who are not familiar with protocols, "the use of an appropriate protocol provides the structure with which participants can give feedback in a way that protects the safety" of the PLC members (Venables, 2011, p. 47). Using protocols helped our teams build a culture in which feedback was expected. Without the structure of protocols, teachers and, at times, instructional leaders were hesitant to offer criticisms to their colleagues, and they assumed the critique would be taken personally. Our leadership team led the way for other PLCs by engaging in cycles of feedback through protocols that required participants to think deeply and critically about the work we do for and with students.

As a leadership team, we engaged in several protocols. The first of these protocols was designed to set group norms, "a set of mutually decided upon

expectations regarding how meeting time will be spent, how disagreements will be addressed, and how all discourse among participants will be conducted" (Venables, 2011, p. 26). Since that time, whenever we work with other educators, we have consistently used group norms for all of our PLCs and believe in their importance for building trust and improving collaboration and communication. We make it a practice to revisit norms as a self-evaluation tool to gauge whether or not the group is living up to their norms or if they need to be revised. We also began to set goals for our meetings, which brought a sense of purpose to our group. Tuning protocols were used to structure our feedback and discussions of student work and teacher-created units and assessments. Consultancy protocols were used in order to discuss dilemmas we were facing instructionally or professionally and allowed us to provide helpful feedback. To learn more about the protocols we implemented, please visit our Recommended Readings PLC section.

The protocols were emphasized at first as we all learned to work together to create a learning community. Structure also helped to maintain fidelity as each leadership team member was expected to replicate the ongoing professional development with his or her content-area learning community. This schoolwide professional development helped us begin to see the powerful potential that teacher learning communities held.

After an academic year (2008–2009) of functioning as PLCs, each content-area PLC moved to a shared leadership model. Members of the PLCs took responsibility for planning the topics for each of our bimonthly meetings. The topics were tied closely to the goals that had been set by the faculty at the beginning of the academic year and centered on offering peer feedback on assessments and instructional strategies through protocols.

We mentioned the importance of building trust in order for feedback to be used to strengthen professional practice, but in the absence of trust or if the relationships are fairly new, it helps to be respected for what you do. We garnered respect because we took time to prove ourselves and our skills by doing whatever it took to improve our school for the needs of the children we served. We built trust by doing what we expected of others and by putting ourselves out there. We had no problem substituting for absent teachers, covering teachers so they could observe others, modeling lessons, filming our instructional strategies, and engaging in other learning activities that we will describe in the coming chapters.

DEFINING QUALITY FEEDBACK

Hattie and Timperley (2007) define feedback as "information provided by an agent regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding" (p. 81).

So how do we define quality feedback? Before we delve into defining and describing details regarding what quality feedback looks and sounds like, we must note that this book is not focused on using feedback for evaluation purposes. Although the information, artifacts, and professional learning we provide may be used to assist in providing feedback for formal evaluations, we are discussing feedback for the purpose of formative assessment, reflective practice, and teacher growth. Our goal is to share a framework for using feedback to guide professional learning that results in professional growth and to convince instructional leaders of its importance. We find it perplexing when talking to teachers who say their principal or instructional coach has observed them only one time in a school year or has never given them feedback on their lesson plans or assessments. Providing constructive feedback to all teachers is indeed time-consuming, but it can be a more worthy use of an instructional leader's time than other tasks involved in leading a school.

We believe that feedback between teachers and instructional leaders should be ongoing and that instructional leaders must contribute to the professional growth of the teachers whom they support. However, feedback, in order to be quality, must go beyond what is working and what needs refining and result in thinking about *how* to improve. One goal of feedback is to elicit a cognitive response, not an emotional one (Wiliam, 2011). The feedback should be intended to provoke an action plan and reflection on professional practice rather than spurring hard feelings or defensiveness.

We see professional learning engagements as the opportunity for instructional leaders and teachers to engage in transactions. The key to this exchange, though, is the quality of feedback that instructional leaders use to guide and grow teachers. Through our extensive reading (see Danielson, 1996; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2014; Feeney, 2007; Frase, 1992; Glickman, 2002; Hurley, 2014; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Ovando, 2005; Wiggins, 2012) and work with educators, we have compiled a list of descriptors of what constitutes quality feedback. Sometimes it helps to qualify a term by also stating what it is *not*—so we included descriptors that we do *not* consider characteristics of quality feedback.

For access to a chart regarding the quality of feedback provided from administrators to teachers visit Learner-Centered Initiatives, Ltd. at http://www.lciltd.org/images/stories/pdf-files/Rubric_for_Quality_Admin_Feedback_to_Teachers_LCI.pdf (and to learn more about resources provided by Learner-Centered Initiatives, Ltd., visit http://www.lciltd.org/). This chart makes the distinction between feedback that judges, informs, guides revisions, and supports improved quality. While writing feedback for teachers or engaging in a conversation following an observation, the

Figure 1.2 Characteristics of Quality Feedback

Feedback is . . .	Feedback is not . . .
direct and honest	ambiguous and misleading, withheld or avoided due to time constraints, sugar-coated, diluted, or filtered in an effort to protect self-esteem
frequent	sporadic, occasional
clear, specific, detailed, action-oriented	vague, general
brief, but informative	lengthy and overwhelming, but empty
based on observable data	personally biased
suggestions, supported with evidence	advice, not supported by an action plan
followed by ongoing support and leads to new learning	a one-shot deal
constructed to elicit a cognitive response	constructed to elicit an emotional response
focused on continuous improvement	focused on single instances
ultimately *intended* to help students	intended to be evaluative
individualized and thoughtful	generic and meaningless
accountability (personal and professional) for both the giver and receiver	unregulated, unstructured, or consequence-free
intentional	accidental, unplanned

chart could be used as a tool to reframe comments and keep the focus on quality and improvement.

School cultures that design professional learning engagements that focus on sharing quality feedback build the capacity in their teachers to focus on mastery and building powerful and reflective models of instruction (Roussin & Zimmerman, 2014). We agree with this notion and have seen it work in schools. Providing quality feedback to individual teachers is one of the most beneficial practices instructional leaders can put into place, but building capacity by training the entire staff and district on recognizing and offering quality feedback is even more important. The entire staff includes instructional leaders, who not only need necessary skills for offering feedback but must also be open to receiving feedback from teachers. Embedding methods for suggesting feedback into PLCs and sharing artifacts with examples of feedback benefits the culture of the school, not just

the practice of individuals—not to mention what it might do for strengthening the types of feedback that are provided by teachers to students. Modeling quality feedback practices for teachers could result in improvements to feedback provided for students. We see a strong connection between current research and writing regarding feedback for students and the use of feedback to develop teachers professionally. Tomlinson (2014) described feedback as "an ongoing exchange between a teacher and his or her students designed to grow as vigorously as possible and to help teachers contribute to that growth as fully as possible" (p. 11).

Providing quality feedback is a strategy that is always readily available and will never change based on the latest program or fad that comes to the educational forefront in schools or states. Many districts we have worked with are certainly guilty of saying they are doing professional development on any number of topics and simply checking it off the list of items to complete. Putting teachers through a handful of workshops on a specific topic and assuming they should be ready to implement the ideas without clear, descriptive feedback from the instructional leaders in their school almost guarantees that there will be no transfer to classroom practice. Instructional leaders also should receive feedback from teachers regarding the professional learning offered before planning and scheduling subsequent learning sessions.

Feedback is an item that will never be placed on a list of items to check off because it should become a perpetual part of all professional learning. In fact, as we were working through revisions of this book, we decided to alter the commonly used term *best practices* and instead use *promising practices*. This decision was the result of a conversation with author and reviewer Pam Robbins, who guided our thinking to reflect the hope that the quality feedback provided to teachers during professional learning can be so powerful that the engagement holds a promise of an outcome. The ideas presented in this book can fit seamlessly into the initiatives already in place in schools, districts, and states and enhance the existing teacher support system in order to strengthen teacher practice through sustained professional learning opportunities for teachers to receive quality feedback and fulfill that promise of an outcome: the transfer of new learning into teacher practice.

Despite this highly productive and low-cost professional growth opportunity for teachers, we briefly touched upon our bewilderment as to how often we witness a lack of feedback from instructional leaders. We work closely with induction (first-year) teachers, and over the years we have heard new teachers comment that they do not receive quality feedback or they receive so little feedback that they do not understand what to do to improve their craft. What we have discovered is that seldom are

instructional leaders explicitly taught how to provide the type of feedback that results in professional growth, thus promoting greater student learning. Although we did not receive training in our graduate studies regarding how to provide feedback, we were fortunate to work with a few great leaders who saw the value in feedback and took time to show us the way. One of those leaders is author Pam Robbins (see Recommended Readings). Pam observed classrooms with us and allowed us to read the feedback she gave teachers following the observations. The three of us observed classes together, and Pam scripted feedback during the lessons; then we read her feedback and reflected on the differences and similarities in our writing. During this time, Abbey was still in the classroom one period a day, and Shawn and Pam also observed her teach and provided feedback. It was a powerful professional learning experience to be both a giver and recipient of feedback. We cannot stress how valuable it was to have an expert in the field model how to give quality feedback. Reading her exemplars gave us the chance to strengthen our own feedback immediately. This experience was one reason we implemented quality feedback with fidelity—early on in our practice we saw the power of clear, descriptive feedback, so we embarked on a self-study and started reading material regarding the subject and put it into practice. We hope that the examples presented in this book serve as models as you embark on your own journey to strengthen the quality of your feedback.

IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY FEEDBACK

If you are in search of an effective strategy to improve teaching and learning, feedback is where it's at. Ken Blanchard famously states that "feedback is the breakfast of champions." Well, we want instructional leaders to start every day thinking about feedback and still be thinking about feedback when they go to bed at night. We already stated that we weren't born giving great feedback. This is a skill that can be developed, and one of the best ways to strengthen the skill of giving quality feedback is by examining feedback given by others to educators. We learned how to give quality feedback from some great leaders and mentors. Instructional leaders "must receive adequate professional development in the art of observing and providing accurate and precise feedback" (Garza, 2001, p. 335). There is no course that we are aware of offered in college regarding giving feedback, and we were never given the opportunity to practice giving feedback to teachers in our graduate programs. So how can instructional leaders develop skills to provide quality feedback to teachers? We hope this book helps to fill that gap.

Ovando (2005) conducted action research with aspiring school leaders to prepare them to deliver constructive feedback. After collecting data via walk-through observations and writing feedback, the following lessons were learned: deliver written feedback in a professional manner, ensure suggestions are implemented, and focus on teachers' strengths balanced with feedback regarding areas of professional growth. Similarly, we conducted our own action research by sharing feedback among instructional leaders and providing each other with feedback about our written feedback provided to teachers. We will supply more details regarding studying and sharing feedback among instructional leaders in subsequent chapters.

FROM WORDS TO ACTION

Instructional leaders who design and execute professional learning experiences for teachers can implement the ideas in this book to enhance their existing teacher support system. A comprehensive guide for instructional leaders, this text provides the tools and structures necessary to create professional learning experiences for teachers that focus on the use of quality feedback, which both supports and encourages professional growth and learning. This text takes a flexible approach to preparing and strengthening teachers professionally, which means instructional leaders can pick and choose the feedback strategies and engagements they see as complementary to the professional learning structures already in place. Research is interwoven with practical advice, artifacts, and authentic scenarios, allowing the reader to easily move from theory into practice. We share our experiences facilitating districtwide professional learning and providing feedback that transforms practice, working with teachers in every grade level and content area. Strengthening teacher practice has a deeper impact on student achievement and offering quality feedback is a low-cost, high-yield strategy one can use to create a culture of professional growth.

As instructional leaders ourselves, we have spent years observing teachers and interacting with them in PLCs but were frustrated by the lack of improvement we witnessed regarding classroom instruction and measurable student outcomes. When reviewing our professional practices while writing this book we searched the term *feedback* in our e-mails and collectively discovered that 2,988 e-mails have been sent by us since 2010 regarding feedback. Searching the term feedback on our computers in our offices and Google Drive produced 1,375 documents. We forgot just how much we have emphasized feedback as an important means of communication in everything we do. However, it wasn't until we began providing quality feedback in strategically sustained ways that we started to see authentic changes in the classroom and increases in student learning.

Instructional leadership *is* the key to all other initiatives' success. Instructional leaders may use our book for their own professional growth and as a guide in their efforts toward offering quality feedback to teachers. Throughout the rest of this book, we will illustrate how to provide quality feedback to teachers and include artifacts that demonstrate quality feedback in action. Instructional leaders who work with teachers will find this book to be a very practical guide that they can use to immediately have an impact on the professional development they design and implement with teachers. As you move through this book, reflect on the big ideas presented in each chapter. Use Figure 1.3 as a planning tool to design a plan of action that will enhance the professional learning structures already in place within your district or school.

Figure 1.3 Planning Tool for Providing Quality Feedback