**Working with students to use feedback as part of their learning**

Produced by the Centre for Learning & Teaching

We need to be working on changing our students’ perceptions of feedback - it is the student’s responsibility to seek feedback, to reflect on feedback, to use feedback and to give feedback to others if they are to learn. (Nash and Winstone, 2017).

Students should be actively looking to peers and tutors for feedback - it needs to be formative, useful, regular, rich, relevant, and recognised as a learning activity in which, and with which, our students need to actively engage. (D, Nicol & D, Macfarlane‐Dick, 2006)

Feedback **MUST** be contextualised, collaborative, developmental and integrated into our students’ day-to-day learning, and colleagues’ day-to-day teaching activity. It should be designed into courses as part of the overall planning - not as an afterthought. (R, Esterhazy., M, Nerland and C, Damşa. 2019)

Feedback should be part of student learning, assimilated into classroom and academic advising activity as part of a continued and integrated part of our students learning. It needs to be useful and is not just a “gift wrapped package” of information delivered as an entitlement after the module has ended and after the work has been done.

You may want to consider some of the following points and guidance to give our students every opportunity to use the feedback to improve their performance in the future and reinforce their current achievement.

1. Be clear **WHY** you are providing feedback to your students in the first place. If there is no opportunity for the students to use it, then sometimes just a mark may be enough.
2. **Be explicit about what feedback actually is**, why it is useful and the breadth of what it entails. Encourage the individual students to identify what sorts of feedback are **most useful** for them.
3. You should consider being as **inclusive** as possible to all your students and use alternative or combinations of feedback methods to suit a greater range of students:
   1. audio/verbal feedback.
   2. In-class discussion/feedback session.
   3. Peer feedback - get the students to work together in class on reviewing example assessments and their own work.
4. **Use clear grading criteria** so that students can understand what is expected of them and how the work has been graded:
   1. Any grading criteria should clearly align to learning outcomes.
   2. Use these grading criteria during feedback (this could be a marking grid or rubric).
   3. Use words in feedback that build skills appropriate to the level of learning e.g. critical thinking, critical reflection etc., and signpost the students to resources to inform clarity and students’ understanding.
5. Ensure there is a **clear structure** to your feedback comments so that a student can follow it systematically through the assessment.
6. **Keep it focussed:** too much feedback can be unhelpful as students feel overwhelmed and not know what they should focus on.
7. **Be specific** with comments, whether they be verbal, or written, in relation to the assessment criteria:
   1. E.g. *not* just ‘you need to be more critical’ instead *try* ‘you need to be more critical because’ or ‘you have critically assessed some of the points but not all, think about …….’
8. Provide clear, achievable **action points** that are clearly expressed, and that focus on the students improving their future learning, the quality of the work and their level of achievement.
9. Emphasise the **transferability** of any feedback received - how can students use it in other modules? For other types of assessment in the future?
10. **Be balanced** in the amount of positive and constructive critique you provide. You may consider using a “feedback sandwich” (positive – constructive – positive) (LeBaron SW, Jernick J. 2000). Encourage the student (perhaps in an academic advisor catch up meeting) to self-reflect on what they feel are their individual areas for development.
11. Make the feedback feel **personal**. Where possible use your student’s name (if work is not anonymised) and make sure they know the person to contact if they have any questions.
12. Feedback should be a dialogue. Why not think about building your face to face contact with students based around their feedback- this can be in an online session or in a classroom? You could encourage academic advisors to support this.
13. **Pitch feedback sensitively and constructively** - a misinterpreted comment can cause unintended stress to students or feel like a personal critique. This is particularly important for students who are improving a “failed” assessment. Use of audio feedback can sometimes help with this as voice intonation can give a greater sense of the meaning of your comments.   
    (Todd, 2012)
14. Identify and provide **opportunities for questions** from students about their feedback. You may want to encourage them to reflect on the more low-stakes formative assessment that may have taken place earlier in the module.
15. Encourage students to self-refer early to **Skills for Learning** for tailored resources and help (workshops, individual one to one sessions) if you notice core academic skills need improving.
16. Feedback should also be **timely**. If your students wait too long to receive their feedback, it can be frustrating and demotivating for them. Providing online feedback can make the time between students submitting work and receiving feedback seem much greater than it is as we are all used to having online information at our fingertips. Providing students with timely feedback also gives students the confidence that you are as committed to the course or module as they are. Set the expectations of when your students will receive their feedback before they submit , try to stick to this, it is better to set a longer time at the start rather than changing the date of feedback after they have submitted.
17. With more online teaching involving the use of forum-based technologies (e.g. Microsoft Teams) these forums can be a good way to build a sense of community amongst learners and a way of students receiving peer feedback, as students respond to each other’s posts. Your role then becomes one of a moderator in the forum, to provide comments to students as they engage in peer feedback.
18. Audio technology (e.g. MP3 files) can be an effective and time-efficient way of providing asynchronous online feedback. Your tone of voice can be a motivating factor for students. Research has shown that students prefer audio feedback for an online course – students found the audio feedback had better clarity, was more personal, more motivating, and easier to remember than written feedback. Students were also ten times more likely to open audio feedback than written feedback. (Wood, Moskovitz, and Valiga.2011)
19. Video technology can also be an effective way to provide one-to-one feedback to individual students. Most PCs and laptops will allow the recording of a video, however these files can be quite large if they are to be used as email attachments, so sharing through OneDrive is a more effective solution. Software such as Microsoft Teams allows the scheduling of video calls with your student at a convenient time and can be used to provide feedback in a familiar synchronous tutorial style format. (Leibold, N. and Schwarz, L. M, 2015) It also allows you to comment on specific parts of your student’s work especially if the assessment is a video, presentation or other visual media through screen sharing options.

**Further Information**

You can read more information about giving effective feedback from the Higher Education Academy (now AdvanceHE) in their feedback toolkit <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/feedback_toolkit_whole1.pdf>

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/feedback-toolkit-10-ideas-enhancing-feedback-technology>

If you want to find out more about different methods of feedback such as audio or video you can find out more here <https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning-activities/assessment-and-feedback/giving-feedback-to-students/>

Skills for Learning <https://skillsforlearning.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/>.

Guides on how to use Turnitin and Blackboard assignment can be found here <https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/guides/learning-systems-guides/>.

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