UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

A spotlight on

Teaching Students to Work With Feedback and Rubrics

Centre for Innovation in Education

Overview

Teaching students to work with feedback and rubrics, can help them to constructively apply their learning as they progress through their studies.

The impact of feedback can be one of the strongest influences, positive or negative, on students' learning and achievement (Hattie, 2009). There is also a wide range of evidence from sources such as the NSS (National Student Survey) and TESTA (Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment) that students are generally dissatisfied with feedback (Office for Students, 2019)
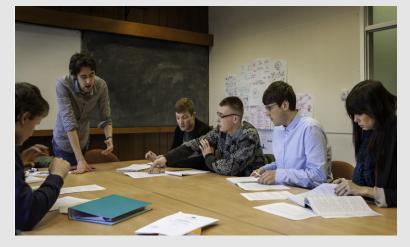
Benefits

Providing students with actionable feedback is beneficial to them improving their understanding of learning. However there are a number of additional benefits to getting students to work with their feedback, such as:

· Providing guidance on students' learning
· Improvements to students' confidence, self-awareness and feedback literacy
· Cultivating enthusiasm for learning
· Motivating students to act on their assessment
· Providing an opportunity for students to self-regulate their learning through monitoring and evaluating their own work (Nicol, 2010).

Putting it into practice

Help students to understand how to use feedback, why it is important and how it can benefit them. Familiarise students with marking criteria, rubrics and expectations, both of them and what they can expect from you.

Consider providing students with exemplars and modelling best practice. Think about how best students can receive and respond to their feedback. Suggestions made, will stimulate learning, rather than simply measuring it. Consider providing guides or frameworks for reflecting on feedback, and ensuring you afford ample time for students to respond to the feedback. If you are concerned that feedback is being overlooked, try giving the feedback before posting the grade. While feedback focuses on current performance, feed forward (Ferrell & Gray, 2016) looks ahead to the next assignment and offers constructive guidance on how to improve.

Self and peer assessment

There is real value in supporting students through self-assessing work (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009) in relation to marking criteria, this works well prior to submission. One method is to ask students to submit informal responses to key questions along with their submissions – such as 'what parts of the assessment do you think were your strongest or weakest?' (CADQ, 2013).

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Peer assessment increases the opportunity for feedback. It allows students to gain valid experience as assessors. This can reinforce interaction with feedback from wider perspectives, enhance reflection and engage students in making and receive judgements on their work.

Design assessment and marking criteria with students
Another way to get students to be actively engaged with their marking criteria is to involve them in designing it. Students will feel motivated and engaged (Moindrot, 2019) by allowing them to take a lead in creating their criteria, as well as gaining a deeper understanding of it (Nicol, 2010). Alternative suggestions could include asking students to rephrase the requirements in their own words and share them with their peers.

Personalised feedback
Feedback generally speaking, needs to be timely, constructive, motivational, personal, manageable and directly related to assessment criteria and learning outcomes (Irons, 2008; Juwah et al., 2004; Race, 2006).

Race (2004) states that feedback needs to fit each specific student's achievement, individual nature, and personality. Each student has their own unique strengths and weaknesses and feedback should be tailored towards these. Targeted feedback also provides improved confidence, especially when a student can see progression from their first assignment through to their current assessment.

Technology
Hepplestone et al (2009) suggest positive impact of technology on students' engagement with feedback. It is argued it can facilitate better dialogue than conventional verbal and written feedback (Nicol & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006).

Further benefits of using technology include the ability to regularly check on progress, increased opportunities to respond to feedback, the ability to have personalised dialogue around feedback and added convenience for both student and tutor to respond.

Support students with feedback and assessment
• **Provide them with exemplars.** This provides feedback to work with and understand before any assessment. A useful exercise could be to ask students to mark and then discuss exemplars in groups.

Be cautious exemplars are not seen as model essays and where anything that doesn't include comment is perfect.
• **Dialogue.** Make sure feedback isn't one way. Provide opportunities for students to discuss feedback with you. Doing this as a group helps share information with those less likely to ask questions.
• **Make use of peer feedback opportunities.** Students get used to giving feedback and receiving a different perspective on their work. It also adds minimal additional workload for staff.
• **Encourage feed forward.** As well as current performance, focus also on providing constructive guidance for upcoming assessments (Ferrell & Gray, 2016). A mixture of feedback and feed forward helps ensure there is developmental impact on learning. It is important to have a holistic overview of assessment through the programme

Challenges and resources
Students understanding task requirements. Students require training on how to interpret rubrics, otherwise the language may be challenging to them.
Students may not be used to, and can be demotivated by receiving criticism
Designing criteria and rubrics with students or giving more personalised feedback takes more time.
Getting students to see past the grade
Students using feedback to inform future work.

Additional Resources & References

Can you help us improve this resource or suggest a future one? Do you need this resource in an alternative format? Please contact us at cie@liverpool.ac.uk

A full list of references are available on the Centre for Innovation in Education website.