Feedback for the longer term: enhancing student feedback literacy

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Rethinking Assessment in Higher Education
Learning for the longer term
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Overview

1. Longer term perspectives
2. Student perspectives
3. Student feedback literacy
4. Challenges & implications
Defining feedback

A process in which learners make sense of comments & use them to enhance work or learning strategies.

Carless & Boud (2018)
5-year longitudinal inquiry

Longitudinal analysis of four undergraduate students’ experiences of feedback
Key research probe

Eliciting examples of feedback that was acted upon
Timeliness

Draft → teacher feedback → submission

What was great is that she gave constructive suggestions about how we can improve. She pointed out what we can do and we revised it. (Eva, year 2)
Action but ...

• Short-term, behaviorist

• Limited student agency

• Risk of teacher dependency
Less is more

“Try not to cover too many points, discuss a small number in detail” (Candice, year 2)

“In-depth is better than lots of shallow ideas” (Eva, year 4)
Using criteria

Philippa & rubrics
AFFECTIVE ASPECTS
Feedback is emotional

Keep CALM
It's Just feedback
Affective responses

Eva’s development:

Year 1: craves support

Year 5: confident enough to face critique
Timing

“Critical feedback at the end is no use”
(Candice, year 5)
STUDENT CHANGE
Long-term change

“I used to procrastinate a lot but now I leave myself more time to revise my assignments and do proofreading”. (Alicia)
Disengagement

“From year 3 onwards I realized that I am not too good or too bad, so I have lost the motivation to improve. I still care about the grades but not that much about the feedback” (Candice, year 5).
Role of degree classification

Final year scramble for desired Degree

Guidance & feedback more important (Alicia, Eva)

Always grappling with what the teacher wants (Philippa)
LONGER-TERM FEEDBACK & OPEN LOOPS
Provocative feedback

The most insightful feedback provokes ongoing thinking and reflection

Puzzlement … confusion … interest
Final teaching practice

Supervisor (May 1983):

“But where’s the pzazz?”
Philippa’s ongoing puzzle

“I want to be synchronized with the markers” (Year 1)

“I still don’t really know what each teacher is looking for” (Year 5)
Feedback Loops

Unclosed loops

Short-term loops

Longer-term loops

Ongoing puzzles
TACKLING FEEDBACK CHALLENGES
Student feedback challenges

Social-affective dimensions

Lack of engagement with feedback

Lack of strategies for using feedback

The way feedback is organized
Teacher-centred feedback

Too much feedback is not aligned with students needs and interests
Limits of Feedback as telling

“Learners do not always learn much purely from being told, even when they are told repeatedly in the kindest possible way” (Sadler, 2015, p. 16)
Social constructivism

Action on feedback is developed through learner agency, dialogue & co-construction
INVOLVE STUDENTS MORE CENTRALLY IN FEEDBACK PROCESSES
Eva (year 2)

“Feedback is usually one-way. I am not going to respond to end-of-module feedback”.

![Ignore Mode Image]
A quest for dialogue

“To really understand the students’ needs is a long-term process. To promote dialogue, teachers could do more to find out how they can help us” (Philippa, year 5)
Student needs

Find out what students want & prefer
Conditions for uptake

Students will only act if comments align with their needs … (and belief systems?)

And there are opportunities to act
STUDENT FEEDBACK
LITERACY
Defining student feedback literacy

Understandings, capacities and dispositions needed to make sense of comments and use them for enhancement purposes (Carless & Boud, 2018).
Student feedback literacy

Appreciating Feedback  →  Making Judgments  →  Managing Affect

Taking Action

(Carless & Boud, 2018)
Teacher role

Curriculum & assessment design to promote generating and using feedback
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE
Invite students to state what feedback they want (Bloxham & Campbell, 2010)
Coversheet follow through

State the previous feedback that you are using to strengthen this assignment
Feedback designs

Designs which position students as active feedback seekers & users (Boud & Molloy, 2013)
References


THANK YOU
Feedback literacy

Learners need to acquire academic literacies to interpret complex ideas; & capacities to act on feedback

(Sutton, 2012)
Limited research on what students do with feedback; teacher-oriented feedback models are questionable
Feedback as telling

Learning from being told is flawed as a general strategy because the conditions for the statements to make intimate connection with the student work (with a view to future work) are rarely satisfied (Sadler, 2010, p. 548)
Alicia

I don’t feel that I have received much feedback that is particularly useful. Often I just got some feedback which told me what I was doing wrong (year 2)

I read through the comments but don’t do anything to follow-up (year 4)
Candice

For mid-term assignments feedback is more useful, for end of semester assignments we don’t come back to it because it is finished. I can’t generalize the comments to other subjects because they are a different topic with a different teacher.
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