FEEDBACK IN ONLINE COURSES

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What is feedback?

Any Information given from an instructor or peer about a learner's performance. Feedback is:

- Constructive
- Positive
- Informational
- Instructional
- Motivating

What are the components of meaningful feedback?

1. **Strengths of the submission** (start you feedback with a positive tone and point out the strengths of the submission)

2. **Areas of improvement** (include the areas of improvements or the recommendations that you have for the learner)

3. **Suggested resources** (provide the student with a resource to check. It could be a website, a paper, a video, or even a post by another colleague)

4. **A question for reflection** (as the student a question that would lead them to expand their thinking about the topic)

What is formative feedback?

Formative feedback is designed to help students learn. It is ongoing feedback that takes place during the semester. Examples:

- on progress reports
- on draft work
- on preparation activity: outline, choice of topic

Questions to consider when providing feedback:

- What can the student do?
- What can't the student do?
- How does the student's work compare with that of others?
- How can the student do better?

Negative feedback	Focused on past unsuccessful behavior
Positive feedback	Focused on past successful behavior
Negative feed-forward	Focused on behavior that should be avoided in the future
Positive feed-forward	Focused on behavior that will improve performance in the future
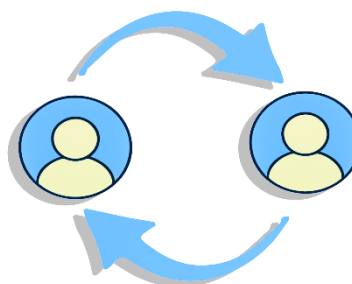
Feedback in online settings plays an important role in creating and support the relationship between the instructor and the students.

What are the different formats of online feedback?

- Written word (commonly used)
- Audio file (you can provide audio recording of your feedback)
- Video (you can provide a video recording of yourself, and you can share the student's work and record video feedback)
- Pre-programmed automatic reply
- One on one conference (you can allow students to schedule 5-minute slots with you. Students come with their questions and receive targeted feedback AS they work)

TIP: Scheduler is a tool that instructors can use to allow students to sign up for face-to-face appointments through eClass. Read more about how to setup scheduler HERE.

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Leading Practices for Online Feedback

Create a feedback-rich environment

- Solicit feedback about your own teaching
- Incorporate feedback in your lesson plan: promote learner self-reflection, self feedback, use peer feedback, vary feedback so it fits the assignment, use group feedback, teacher feedback, automated feedback.

Make it actionable

- Give the students extra steps to take or resources to explore or a plan to follow

Personalize your feedback

- Use student first name when providing feedback
- Schedule 5-minute feedback sessions with individual students

Provide generic feedback

- You can make a list of feedback that is common to many students or might benefit all the students in your class.
- Record a video or write a post containing the feedback, the areas of improvement and resources

Provide frequent feedback

- Communicate the frequency in the course syllabus.
- For example: "Feedback for weekly discussions is available to learners each week by Wednesday at 11:59 pm. Feedback for assignments is available to learners within 7 days of the due date".

Provide immediate feedback

- Immediate feedback ranges from 24 to 48 hours and up to one to two weeks
- Online discussion feedback: within 72 hours of the due date and time.
- Assignment feedback: in less than one week from the due date

(Getzlaf et al., 2009)

Provide specific feedback

INSTEAD OF…	USE:
"this is vague" "there are grammar errors" "good paper"	"I recommend you add an example to clarify the idea for the reader?" "Say more about this idea by explaining it from a different angle." "Good work with the resources that you chose."

Plan for feedback time before the final submission

- Create small assignments that build to a larger, final assignment
- Provide check-in times where students can ask about an assignment and get feedback

8 Helpful Techniques for Positive Instructor Feedback

Below are 9 techniques that you can use to provide positive feedback to your students. The information below was inspired from an article published by eLearning Industry. You can find the article HERE.

1. Appreciate your student's effort
   - Acknowledge the effort that students have put in, regardless of the outcome
   - Thank your students for their efforts
   - Acknowledge the time they spent doing the assignment

   Example: Thank you for your submission/thank you for sharing your experience with us!

2. Repeat ideas mentioned in the student's submission
   - Restate an idea or more that the student shared
   - Helps the student feel heard

   Example: I agree with your idea on .../ thank you for sharing the video on ...

3. Provide your student with links to resources/acknowledge the resources used by students
   - You can refer the students to links related to what they wrote
   - If the students mention links, you can thank them and let them know that you checked it/will check it

   Example: Thank you for sharing the link about X, I found it interesting and relevant.

4. Ask your students questions
   - You can ask questions about the student's thinking
   - To inspire the student to look at other point of views
   - To motivate the students to make changes to their work

   Example: Have you thought about the situation X from the perspective of Y?

5. Provide you student with next steps
   - Provide next steps for learners to improve their work

   Example: You can add a brief description at the beginning of your video submission to help the audience focus their attention.

6. Share personal experience with your student
   - Helps foster a good relationship with the students
   - Provides real world experience to students

   Example: I often use this in my classes/ I have tried this experiment.

7. Connect students among each other
   - Helps create a community among learners
   - You can ask students with similar interests to connect

   Example: you might want to connect with X who has the same interests.

8. Provide encouragement to your students
   - Motivates students to improve their work

   Example: Keep working! I am sure you will do great!

Beyond Instructor Feedback...

Peer Feedback

Have you considered allowing students to give feedback to each other? Peer feedback allows students to have a better understanding of the task, learn to work collaboratively, and develop communication skills. You can learn more about peer feedback HERE.

Techniques (retrieved from aitsl-peer-feedback-stratedy.pdf):

- **Two stars and a wish**: learners are asked to provide two strengths and one area of improvement.
- **Plus, minus, what's next**: learners provide one strength, one area of improvement, and one suggestion for future work.
- **C3B4ME**: (see three before me) learners are required to get feedback from three other peers before receiving feedback from the instructor.

Examples

In-class peer review: Guidelines for In-Class Peer Review – Writing Across the Curriculum – UW–Madison (wisc.edu)

Focused peer review in psychology: Activities for Focused Peer Review – Writing Across the Curriculum – UW–Madison (wisc.edu)

Peer review checklist: Peer Review Checklist – Writing Across the Curriculum – UW–Madison (wisc.edu)

Preparing students for peer feedback: Preparing Students in Advance for Peer Review – Writing Across the Curriculum – UW–Madison (wisc.edu)

Making peer review work: Making Peer Review Work – Writing Across the Curriculum – UW–Madison (wisc.edu)

More on peer review from University of Waterloo: https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/resources-peer-review-theory-and-practice

Self Feedback

Self feedback refers to the practice of involving students in revieing their own work.

Self Feedback promotes self-reflection and self-regulation.

Techniques

- Ask student to fill a logbook with elements they don't understand
- Ask students to create action plans for their learning
- Consider giving students a rubric or marking sheets (example HERE) for self-assessment
- Involve the students in creating the rubric or the model answers.

To learn more:

- Check HERE for more on self assessment.
- Check HERE for more on self feedback.

Would you like to learn more?

Contact us at Teaching Commons for additional resources, handouts, applications, courses, workshops, examples, advice, assistance, consulting, and anything else related to teaching and learning. We are here and eager to help!

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