

PROVIDING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK IN CLINICAL EDUCATION

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- Within health professional education, feedback has been described as “Specific information about the comparison between a trainee’s observed performance and a standard, given with the intent to improve the trainee’s performance”.
- Feedback is one of the most important forms of interaction between the ‘teacher’ and the ‘learner’.
- The provision of feedback forms an integral part of the learning process, helping to narrow the gap between actual and desired performance.



- The feedback process engages the learner with information about the quality of their performance and leads to improvements in learning strategies.
- Feedback supports learners' effective decision-making, and helps to improve learning outcomes.
- It serves as a powerful tool to provide the learner with judgments on their performance, assisting in their educational progress.
- The ability to assess and provide **effective/constructive** feedback is a learned skill, requiring an appropriate level of training.

Purpose of feedback



- Feedback acts as a continuing part of the instructional process that supports and enhances learning.
- It is part of an ongoing unit of instruction and assessment, rather than a separate educational entity.
- A core component of formative assessment, feedback promotes learning in three ways :
 1. **Informs the student of their progress**
 2. **Informs the student regarding observed learning needs for improvement**
 3. **Motivates the student to engage in appropriate learning activities**

Creating a supportive environment for feedback

Feedback Rich Environment



- Requirements for sustainable and meaningful feedback shift the focus from the provision of feedback to the design of the learning environment that promotes the facilitation of feedback .
- Rather than facilitating individual acts of information provision and reception, feedback should be viewed as the promotion of active learning.
- Teachers are responsible for fostering interactions between students and their peers, and students and staff.
- Learning environments should be created where students see themselves as agents of their own change, fostering self-regulation and driving their own learning.
- Fostering high levels of student engagement helps to develop the identity of students as proactive ‘learners’, who seek feedback and reflect on their own performance.

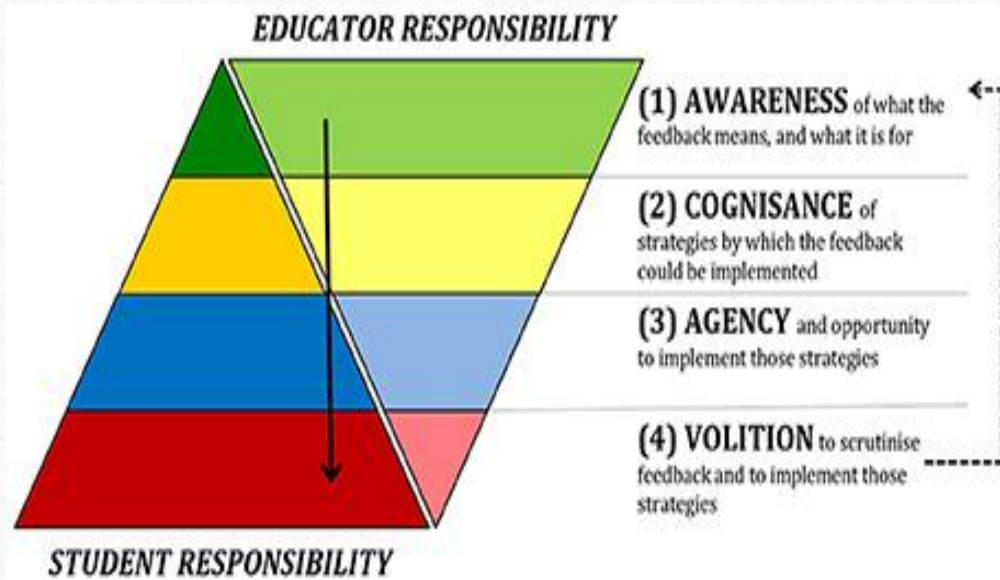
Barriers to the feedback process



There may be a number of barriers to the feedback process, including:

1. Lack of direct observation of tasks.
2. The desire to avoid upsetting students with honest and critical feedback.
3. Lack of external feedback.

Learner reception of feedback



- Similar to giving feedback, receiving feedback is not a passive, simple act.
- It entails honest self-reflection and commitment to practice and improvement of clinical skills.
- Learners are not always prepared to receive, and more importantly, accept feedback.
- Acceptance and effectiveness of the feedback may be dependent upon the perceived credibility of the provider.

Student peer-to-peer feedback



- The practice of providing feedback to peers is perceived by students as beneficial to the development of knowledge, skills, and professional attributes.
- However, unsurprisingly, there are real concerns regarding the honesty and accuracy of peer feedback.
- The inability of students to provide constructive feedback to peers has been attributed to both inadequate training and social discomfort.

Self-assessment and reflection on performance



45 AWESOME, MUST-USE QUESTIONS TO
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- Feedback also acts as a tool to cultivate self-assessment and reflection on performance.
- Evidence suggests that self-assessment is inaccurate; high performers underestimate themselves, while poor performers overestimate.
- Receiving external feedback, however, allows learners to benchmark their self-assessments against appropriate criteria.

Effective feedback

Table 1 Feedback model (data from Pendleton et al., 1984) [18]

1. Ask the learner what went well
 2. Tell the learner what went well
 3. Ask the learner what could be improved
 4. Tell the learner what could be improved
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- Effective and regular feedback reinforces good practice, promotes self-reflection, and motivates the learner to work towards their desired outcome.
- Using a structured method, such as Pendleton's model (1984), illustrated in Table 1, is useful for providing feedback .
- This model of feedback offers learners the opportunity to evaluate their own practice, and identify ways of improving. It also allows for immediate feedback from the observer.



- Direct observation and clear goals are needed in the provision of effective feedback, with good performance being reinforced, and poor performance being corrected.
- There are a number of key principles to consider when conducting effective feedback. Namely, feedback should be:
 1. Planned, considering the place, timing and environment
 2. Explicit
 3. Descriptive
 4. Focused on behaviour, not personality
 5. Specific
 6. Concise
 7. Verified by the recipient
 8. Honest

- The success of a feedback session is dependent on three broad areas:

1. Structure

2. Format

3. Content

Table 3 Three key areas of a successful feedback session [2]

Structure

- Schedule the feedback session at convenient time for teacher and student
- Make the purpose of meeting clear
- Seating arrangement in the room should show the teacher as a 'participant' e.g. round table
- Feedback should focus on observed knowledge, attitudes and behaviours
- The format of the session should include self-assessment, teacher assessment and joint development of an action plan


Format

- The aim of the feedback session is to improve student performance - make this clear
- Session structure should be made clear - student self-assessment, teacher assessment, joint development of an action plan
- Use an appropriate feedback model e.g. Pendleton's positive critique method
- It is important to both give positive feedback and areas requiring improvement
- The assessor should provide examples and strategies for improvement

Content

- Teachers and students need time to prepare respective content for the session
 - The learner should assess their own learning objectives for the clinical placement, including formal objectives and personal objectives
 - The teacher should prepare for the session by making direct observations of the student's performance, and gaining feedback from others on the team
 - The teacher should review notes and only select a few points to cover
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The role of curriculum design in promoting feedback

 The University of Hong Kong

Teacher role

Curriculum & assessment design to promote generating and using feedback



- The curriculum should be deliberately designed to inspire students to engage in feedback.
- Fruitful learning environments should be constructed by students to practice and actively build on their ability to make judgments about their work.
- Comparisons of performance should be encouraged early in the curriculum. This helps students to develop an awareness of their current capabilities, and plan for their own learning needs.
- Self-regulated learning (SRL) offers a process that empowers students to actively engage in and direct their learning.
- The use of SRL helps students to set goals, actively engage in learning activities, and monitor their progress and actions in the achievement of their goals.



- The learning environment should foster feedback.
- Effective feedback has the potential to improve skills and change the learner's behavior.
- Using a structured format to provide feedback (such as Pendleton's model), assists in self-reflection and the provision of clear, constructive advice.
- The curriculum should be deliberately designed to inspire students to engage in feedback.

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