

TACIT QUICK GUIDES

TEACHING and ASSESSMENT at CIT

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A challenge is to ensure that students see the value of these comments so it might be useful to specifically mention a future assignment where the comment would apply. We can also help students to: plan to take specific action, so the next assessment, or future task is at the forefront of their minds. For example, after returning the assignment with feedback to the students you could encourage them to engage with the feedback by getting them to write a paragraph on how they will improve in future work based on the feedback received here. Examples of tasks you could ask them to carry out include:

- A. Locate and summarise a useful resource on referencing,
- B. Identify a useful online resource outlining how to compose a good essay or commence a literature review, and share it with your lecturer and peers,
- C. Take stock of where they feel they need further assistance and seek help to improve their ability in this area.

5. ENCOURAGE ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUR COMMENTS

Learning from feedback involves much more than simply receiving information – opportunities for action, change and interaction are also important as part of an overall process. It can be helpful, for instance, to offer students opportunities to discuss comments on their assignments, so they can clarify any misunderstandings and you can see how students are responding to your comments.

Other suggestions include getting students to think in advance of submission about what would best help them, perhaps by requesting the type of feedback they'd value most when they submit an assignment, or taking 10 minutes to undertake a self-evaluation activity just before they hand in an assignment. Asking students to self-assess, then targeting your comments on areas where their judgements differ from your expert evaluations, can be a powerful means of helping students better understand quality and gauge what actions they need to take in future (for further information see TACIT Guide 7 - Getting students to self-assess to deepen their learning and develop feedback dialogues).

Students often expect tutor comments to focus on 'telling,' 'correcting' and indicating where they went 'wrong'. The way we construct comments can help with this. For example, try to balance directions (corrections, commands and so on which explicitly point out specific changes to the text) with more facilitative comments framed as questions or suggestions, (observations designed to engage your student with the text). For instance, you could ask 'how does this point connect with your overall thesis?' 'What are the consequences of this way of approaching the issue?'

6. DISCUSS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR FEEDBACK

It may also be useful to explicitly discuss, in class, the multiple functions of feedback and clarify your purpose, so as to expand their view of what you hope your comments will achieve. For example, you might hope to generate more learning by suggesting further specific study tasks; to develop understanding via explanations; to highlight inter-connections; to enhance skills; to stimulate reflection and awareness of learning processes; to help students learn to evaluate their own work.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

If we get it right and make feedback a vehicle for learning, we can make a real difference to students' achievements and morale. Equally, we can damage students' confidence and their willingness to keep trying if they don't perceive what we are saying as useful. Helping them understand that everything we say or write is directed towards enabling them to move forward positively is crucial.

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