

5. GET STUDENTS TO FOCUS ON COMMENTS RATHER THAN MARKS

There is a belief that when students are provided with marks and feedback on an assignment that students will only focus on the marks. To address this we could provide a commentary or return work to them with words (or audio) only and then ask them to deduce their marks from what you say/write in relation to each criterion (this assumes that students have access to grading sheets or criteria). Only when they've had a stab at estimating their grades should they then access the mark you've awarded. You could arrange to do this in a two-stage process, perhaps meeting them in between or asking them to write a brief reflection. It might be possible to automate much of this using your institute's VLE.

6. HELP STUDENTS TO BELIEVE THEY HAVE THE AGENCY TO IMPROVE THEIR WORK:

By giving specific and practical advice on how to improve, we can move them away from a mindset that tells them they can't improve due to lack of innate talent.

7. CONSIDER USING TWO-STAGE/PATCHWORK ASSIGNMENTS

A two-stage (or patchwork) assignment consists of two or more related phases or tasks in which feedback from the initial phase(s) can be used to enhance the quality of work of subsequent phases. Often this might take the form of a draft of an essay or report and then the final version. Equally the initial stages might focus on key processes involved in the production of the final assignment e.g. a literature review, specifications or user requirements, a conceptual design, flow chart, a project plan, etc. The advantage of two-stage assignments is that learners can readily appreciate how the feedback on the first stage can be applied and used to improve performance on the second or subsequent stages.

8. ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO THINK OF FEEDBACK AS A TRIGGER TO THEM TAKING ACTION

If they become active in the use of the feedback we give them, rather than passive recipients of our comments, they are more likely to do better work in the future. Help them recognise their responsibility in the feedback process by explicitly helping them set overall targets and plans for future work, and by setting students initial tasks which enable them to apply what they've learned to a connected follow-up task.

9. PAY MORE ATTENTION TO ASCERTAINING WHETHER AND HOW FEEDBACK HAS BEEN UNDERSTOOD AND ACTED UPON

For example by offering opportunities for students to discuss their feedback with markers, (so you can check they have grasped the main messages and have suitable implementation strategies), or asking students to explain how they responded to feedback in a two-stage or patchwork assignment or follow-up task.

10. ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO MONITOR AND REVIEW THEIR RESPONSES TO FEEDBACK AS THEY MOVE THROUGH THE PROGRAMME

We can build occasional touch points into programmes which focus on encouraging students to document and evaluate their overall performance and feedback over time. Dedicated opportunities to discuss feedback might focus on supporting students to compile action plans and feedback portfolios, thereby developing their goal-setting skills and enhancing self-regulation.

11. GIVE THEM SOME EXAMPLES OF HELPFUL FEEDBACK AS A PROMPT TO DISCUSSION

If students in-class scrutinise what good feedback looks like and is aiming to achieve, and the ways in which it is prompting them to apply the feedback, it may help them be more mindful of the feedback they receive and to take it more seriously.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

It's important not to assume that students necessarily share our conceptions of the importance and value of formative feedback as a means of helping them transform their practice. If they do nothing as a result of our feedback, we may need to question our approaches and delivery, while recognising that a few will take no resultant action whatever we do!

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