Facilitating feedback in the block

Embedding strong structured opportunities for constructive feedback is a key principle of the Block. Feedback from purposefully designed activities is useful preparation for assessments. An early assessment in the Block is also a deliberate early feedback opportunity, as feedback is most helpful when given early.

Good, constructive feedback that engages students in continuous improvement and promotes learning is:

1 Focused on performance
2 Phrased in encouraging language
3 Provided early
4 Aligned with the assessment requirements and learning outcomes
5 Actionable
6 Communicated clearly
7 Feeds forward to the next stage of learning
8 Manageable without overloading the recipient

Seven principles of giving good feedback

Good feedback should:

1 Facilitate the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning
2 Encourage teacher and peer dialogue around learning
3 Clarify what good performance is (i.e. goals, criteria, standards expected)
4 Provide opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance
5 Deliver high quality information to students about their learning
6 Encourage positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem
7 Provide information to teachers that can be used to help shape their teaching

(Nicol& MacFarlane-Dick, 2006; Juwah et al, 2004)

Teacher roles and student responsibilities

Feedback is a partnership between the teacher and student. It is important for the teacher to help form what students think is feedback—it is not just something that is 'given' but it is expected that students *always* use it to improve their work. Feedback is *most* effective when solicited, so try to engage students in the process by normalising feedback-seeking behaviour. Students should be made aware of various feedback approaches, including their own responsibility in reflection, actioning feedback, and engaging in self and peer review activities.

Effective feedback strategies

Effective feedback can be provided in a number of ways:

1 to individual students, to groups or to the whole class either on an activity or draft submission or following an assessment
2 as self-assessment activities where students are encouraged to self-monitor, self-assess and benchmark their work to generate their own feedback
3 using peer-review activities to discuss the standards required, and then ask students to review the work of their peers against descriptive criteria

In order to expose students to a variety of perspectives, employ a range of strategies that involve self, peer, and teacher feedback.

1 **Provide automated feedback** via the assessment rubrics on VU Collaborate or via quiz feedback.
2 **Incorporate self-assessment opportunities** using quizzes with various question types (multiple choice, T/F, short answer) as after-class activities.
3 **Facilitate opportunities for self-assessment**. Encourage students to evaluate their own work against the assessment criteria in the rubric prior to submitting an assessment.
4 **Build capability.** Give students a rubric to mark a work sample followed by class discussion to establish a benchmark for the expected quality of the assessment.
5 **Use exemplars.** Select exemplars for specific purposes, e.g. assessment tasks are rarely of a high distinction level across all assessment criteria. Deliberately select a variety of samples.
6 **Promote peer review/ feedback.** Directly involve students in reviewing peer work and providing peers with feedback. This is a powerful strategy which develops students' critical evaluation skills.

Using technology to enable feedback

Wherever possible, use technology to make the feedback process more efficient. You can provide personalised feedback using online annotations, audio, and video as well as rubrics, or take advantage of automated feedback provided by quizzes and rubrics. There is also technology available to support feedback from peer-review activities.

Want to know more?

Articles and reports
Nicol, DJ & Macfarlane-Dick, D. 2006. 'Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice', *Studies in Higher Education,* vol. 31: 2, pp. 199-218.

Juwah, C, Macfarlane, D, Nicol, D & Ross, D (2004). *Enhancing Student Learning Through Effective Formative Feedback.*

Pearson 2016. *Providing Educational Feedback. White Paper.* Higher Education Services, viewed 15 February 2020, < https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/one-dot-com/one-dot-com/us/en/pearson-ed/downloads/Feedback.pdf >

University of Melbourne 2014. *Providing effective feedback to students,* viewed 15 February 2020, <https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1722397/providing-effective-feedback-to-students.pdf>

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ACADEM 2017. 'The importance of self-assessment', ACADEM website, viewed 15 February 2020, < https://academ.com.au/importance-student-self-assessment/ >