

NU Learning and Teaching Toolkit #6

Effective Feedback Practices



Dear all,

We hope that this toolkit will be helpful in developing effective feedback strategies.

AQE Team, Office of the Provost

It is important that faculty engage not only in assessment *of* learning, but also assessment *for* learning. [ESG](#) standard 1.3 emphasizes the importance of feedback that informs student progress and development.

What is feedback?

Feedback is information that clarifies a student's current performance against learning outcomes and criteria, recognizes his/her strengths, and suggests ways for improvement.

General assessment principles:

Assessment and feedback must be central to the curriculum design process (Fig.1). Feedback should relate clearly and directly to the planned learning outcomes (LOs). The [NU Learning and Teaching Toolkit 2](#) might be helpful in assessing the achievement of LOs.



Feedback should be clear, explicit, constructive, accurate, and timely ([NU Assessment Strategy 2016](#)).

Feedback structure

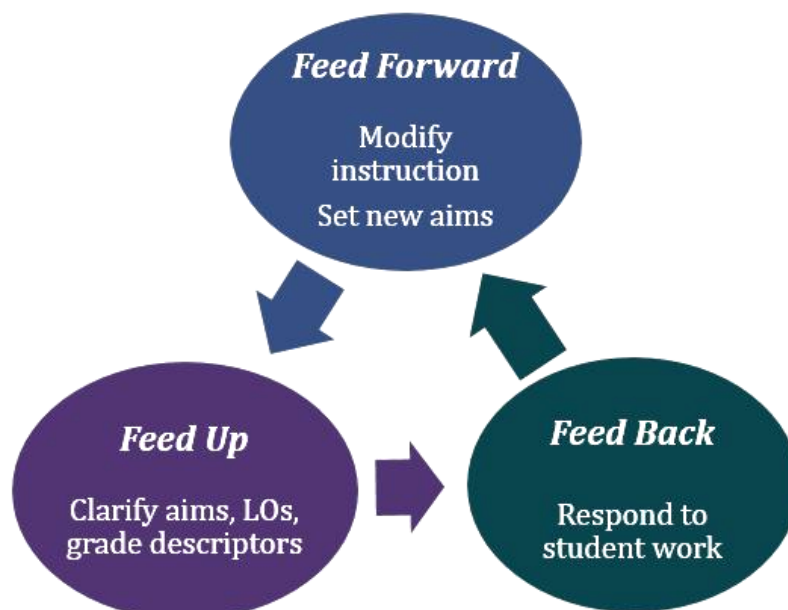
Effective feedback should contain the following elements (Fig.2):



- **a description of the student's work** (what has or has not been done);
- **evaluative comments** linked to grade descriptors that indicate the degree to which a certain LO has been achieved;
- **suggestions of alternative approaches** for improvement;
- **directions to resources** that the student could use;
- **motivating observations** that indicate which aspects are praiseworthy.

Feedback system

An effective assessment system includes the following steps: *feed up*, *feed back*, and *feed forward* (Fig 3). Instructors are encouraged to follow the complete cycle. (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).



Principles of effective feedback

A review of various studies helps us to identify the following set of principles. (See the detailed list of references below).

Principle 1: Specify assignment requirements and provide clear assessment criteria

Advice:

1. Provide explicit criteria of performance via grading rubrics and grade descriptors;
2. Discuss the criteria in class before giving an assignment;
3. Show examples of good performance.

(Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Principle 2: Support the development of self-assessment skills

Advice:

1. Involve students in peer review using defined criteria and standards;
2. Allow them to identify the type of feedback they would like on an assessment task before they submit the work;
3. Require students to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the completed assignment against the criteria;
4. Encourage them to compile a portfolio of selected (and annotated) work to monitor their progress;
5. Ask students to develop a comprehensive set of rubrics, where the criteria have already been prepared (related to the planned LOs).

(Race, 2002)

Principle 3: Deliver high-quality information to students about their learning

Advice:

1. Provide constructive feedback in relation to pre-defined criteria;
 2. Offer corrective advice, not just information on strengths/weaknesses;
 3. Prioritize areas for improvement;
 4. Give timely comments that the students can use.
-

GSE shares good practices

The video below summarizes key strategies used by Professor Sharplin for offering feedback to students. Please watch this video created by Ricardo De Braganca, the NU graphic instructional designer.



Principle 4: Promote teacher and peer dialogue around learning

Advice:

1. Encourage students to discuss comments with their peers;
2. Ask them to point out useful comments and explain how they helped. You may use a checklist (e.g., “Was the feedback: Helpful? Clear? Fair? Correct?”);
3. Assign one-minute papers in class & discuss the results;
4. Suggest strategies to improve future performance.

(Race, 2002)

Principle 5: Boost motivation and self-esteem

Advice:

1. Provide grades only after students have responded to formative comments;
2. Allow them to rewrite selected assessment tasks;
3. Use automated testing with feedback for “low-stakes” formative assessment;
4. Encourage students to submit drafts for comments & to re-submit assessment pieces.

(Cauley & McMillan, 2010).

"Feedback is a powerful way to affect student achievement."

(Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Principle 6: Provide opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance

Advice:

1. Use nested assignments, where one assessment task reflects on or builds on a

previous one. (Biggs & Tang, 2011);

2. Identify and explain common mistakes, or provide model answers against which students can compare their work;
3. Initiate group discussions to determine action points in response to feedback;
4. Encourage students to apply the feedback explicitly when doing similar work.

(Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006)

Principle 7: Provide information that instructors can use to improve teaching

Advice:

1. Analyze the extent to which students have achieved the LOs (against grade descriptors) and tailor your teaching and learning strategies accordingly;
2. Adjust your feedback strategies in accordance with students' comments;
3. Modify your assessment methods and grading rubrics based on the received feedback.

References and resources

To read more about effective feedback practices, please click on the button below.

Useful links and resources

Previous Issues

Toolkit #1 - Research-Integrated and Inquiry-Based Learning

Toolkit #2 - Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Toolkit #3 - Course Design

Toolkit #4 -Development of Learning Outcomes

Toolkit #5 - Calculating student workload within the ECTS

Toolkit # 1

Toolkit # 2

Toolkit # 3

Toolkit # 4

Toolkit # 5

mailer lite