Definition

Feedback is an essential part of education and training programmes. It helps learners to maximise their potential at different stages of training, raise their awareness of strengths and areas for improvement, and identify actions to be taken to improve performance.

Types of Feedback

This type of feedback is specific, issue--focused and based on observations. There are four types of constructive feedback: • Negative feedback – corrective comments about past behaviour. Focuses on behaviour that wasn't successful and shouldn't be repeated. • Positive feedback – affirming comments about past behaviour. Focuses on behaviour that was successful and should be continued. • Negative feed-f-orward – corrective comments about future performance. Focuses on behaviour that should be avoided in the future. • Positive feed-forward – affirming comments about future behaviour. Focused on behaviour that will improve performance in the future.

Recommendations

1. Invite the individual
To self-assess
For instance, "what do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of your analysis?"
2. Comment on positives

Recommendations (cont)

Whenever possible, try to give some (genuine) positive feedback – it makes the negative easier to bear.
3. Focus on the behavior not the person.
For instance, "I think that the draft you've given me needs more thorough editing here, and here", rather than "Your writing is really shoddy."
4. Be specific and clear; if possible, suggest concrete ways to make improvements
For instance, "The proposed method does not align well with the methodology. Are there studies in the literature that can provide guidance?
5. Own the statement Use 'I' statements rather than 'you' statements, e.g. "I find your description confusing" rather than "you sound confused here".
6. Don't wait Immediate feedback is the most valuable. If this is not possible, give it as soon as you can.
7. Recognize that an immediate response to negative feedback may be defensive.
Be prepared for these kinds of responses since without addressing them the feedback is unlikely to have much effect.

Techniques

ROCK STAR MOMENTS
"Rock Star Moments" is a group feedback activity that asks a small group (3-4) of students to determine which writer in the group has the best example of different parts of the paper/skills. They share these "rock star moments" in a collaborative Google Slideshow. You can then have different groups share with each other so that students are able to see as many "Rock Star" moments as possible.

FEEDBACK LETTER
This is the best, time-s-aving technique for grading I've ever come across, a.k.a. of all these feedback strategies, it's my BFF. Here's the gist: After reading through a set of papers, you write a letter to students. In this letter, you share and discuss overall trends you're noticing, share screenshots of awesome student examples, and provide suggestions and resources for revision. The key is to make sure students have time to read the letter and revise on the spot. If you don't hold them accountable for reading and doing something with the information you're providing, nothing happens.

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