The psychology of assessment and feedback processes in higher education

Dr Naomi Winstone

@DocWinstone  @SurreyLab
Let’s engage in some intellectual streaking*….

*Bearman & Molloy (2017), Medical Teacher, 39(12), 1284-1285
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Route mastery: can we turn student feedback into a two-way street?

We need a cultural shift in the process of providing comments on student work, argue Naomi Winstone and Robert Nash.

“The solution will require us collectively to create learning environments in which students’ active participation in the process is expected and valued.”

Dimensions of feedback recipience

**FEEDBACK RECIPIENCE SKILLS**

**WINSTONE ET AL. (2017)**

- **SELF-APPRaisal**
- **ASSESSMENT LITERACY**
- **GOAL-SETTING & SELF-REGULATION**
- **ENGAGEMENT & MOTIVATION**

The psychology of feedback...

Feedback can be difficult to hear
THE EMOTIONAL DIMENSION

Feedback can be difficult to use
THE MOTIVATIONAL DIMENSION

Feedback can be difficult to remember
THE COGNITIVE DIMENSION
The emotional dimension

“We all want to meet our own expectations of ourselves, and so being critiqued – or even just the prospect of being critiqued – can present an enormous threat to our self-esteem and positive sense of identity.”
The emotional dimension

Winstone, Rees, Niculescu & Medland (in prep)
The emotional dimension

But I think most students, you get...you get your coursework back, you look at the mark. If it’s really good, you probably won’t read the feedback. If it’s not so great, you probably will look at it, and that’s about it.

I think you’re more likely to ignore [negative comments]. [Laughs] To save yourself, kinda thing!

The emotional dimension

Control-Value Theory (Artino & Pekrun, 2014)

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<td>CONTENTMENT</td>
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Artino & Pekrun (2014) *Academic Medicine, 89*(12), 1696
Managing Emotion

Strategy 1: Build feedback literacy

(1) Feedback guide
(2) Feedback workshop
(3) Feedback portfolio

http://tinyurl.com/hea-deft

Strategy 2: We're in this together

Managing Emotion

“I liked the idea and the experiment but feel that it would have been much better with more effort.”

“Although rewriting and adding new experiments may be helpful, this would result in something that is more like an entirely new manuscript.”
Strategy 3: “Defanging Feedback”

http://philldawson.com/defanging-feedback-by-rewriting-into-action-items/

“However, I’ve found that when I make my first step rewriting the feedback comments into actionable todos for myself that this stops me from needing to affectively engage again. In rewriting I’m making them tasks I assign myself rather than critique – I’m ‘defanging’ the feedback. The emotional charge is mostly gone and I’m left with a set of todos”.
“...you didn’t always demonstrate a sophisticated awareness of the issues you covered...”

“...you should aim to demonstrate a more sophisticated awareness of the issues you cover...”

tinyurl.com/ForgottenFeedback
10 Experiments (N = 852)

On average, only 3/20 comments recalled after a short delay

Evaluative Recall Bias

People recalled **47%** more evaluative feedback than directive feedback

Evaluative Retrieval Style

All comments tend to be recalled as evaluative, regardless of how they were presented
“Um, I think ideally, I should go through all my feedback and kind of find the points of commonalities. Erm, and make a list of those and just be aware of those consciously but, again, when you’ve got five hundred things to do... [Laughs] it’s not really on the top of your priority list”
Supporting synthesis

FEATS
Feedback Engagement and Tracking at Surrey
Act upon and track the impact of your feedback

Section A: Feedback Review and Synthesis Tool

Section B: Skill Development Tool

Section C: Action Planning Tool

https://tinyurl.com/FEATSportfolio
The motivational dimension

Do you have TAA Deficiency?

(Howell & Shepperd, 2013)
“I suppose it’s just the time...time-consuming to go through and try and read through it all and then find it for yourself. So, that’d be...I would...more likely to use it if someone just said to me, ‘Here’s your bullet points of what you need to do’.”

Giving students ownership
Facilitating uptake
Facilitating uptake

Comment [h1]: Needs work.
Comment [h2]: ???
Comment [h3]: Not sure where this is going.
Comment [h4]: Restructure.
Comment [h5]: This doesn’t make any sense
Comment [h6]: Rewrite.
Facilitating uptake
Facilitating uptake

1. Task series

Students complete a series of similar tasks (for example, a series of lab reports), where each cycle of feedback enables them to apply comments to the next iteration of the task.

3. Draft-plus-rework

Students receive detailed comments on a draft assignment. When students submit the final assignment, a portion of the grade is reserved for evidence that they have used the feedback from the draft (for example, by completing a written reflection on their feedback use).

2. Two-part tasks

Students undertake a first task (for example, a presentation), followed by a feedback process whereby they use the feedback to inform a second, related task (for example, a written report).

4. Pre-task guidance

Students are given the opportunity to engage with rubrics, criteria, and/or exemplar assignments before completing their own assignment. This dialogue with peers and teachers serves as pre-task feedback that informs the approach they take.

Winstone & Carless (2019)
Engagement through partnership

“We're paying for education so it's not our, sort of responsibility to engage with feedback because we're paying for it”

-- Undergraduate Economics student

Winstone, Medland, Bourne, Rees & Niculescu (in prep)

“I assume [students] are educated enough to deal constructively with the feedback they receive – otherwise they should not be at my university anyway”

Winstone & Carless (2019)
Engagement through partnership

Responsibility-Sharing in the Giving and Receiving of Assessment Feedback

Robert A. Nash¹* and Naomi E. W instone²

¹ Department of Psychology, Aston University, Birmingham, United Kingdom. ² Department of Higher Education, University of Surrey, Guildford, United Kingdom
Feedback is a two-way street. So why does the NSS only look one way?

Being positioned as passive recipients of lecturers’ appraisal does nothing to promote the development of crucial graduate attributes, say Naomi Winstone and Edd Pitt.

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https://www.surrey.ac.uk/department-higher-education/learning-lab

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