Strategies to Develop a Feedback-Rich Environment

Involve students as active participants in the feedback process

Create common understandings about feedback:
- Align perceptions of teacher and student understandings and expectations around feedback through class discussion i.e. the purpose of feedback and how it can support learning.
- Explain to students the personal position from which you provide feedback; that it relates to the work that a student has produced, rather than as a reflection of that student as a person or as a learner.
- Discuss with students the types of feedback e.g. early, formative or summative you will use and why you choose to use them in particular instances.
- Create a shared understanding of assessment goals (criteria/standards) by providing exemplars of performance so students can compare their work against the standard or marking rubrics/criteria.

Create opportunities for students to contribute in the feedback process:
- Ask students for input into informal feedback questions e.g. ask students in groups to identify ‘a question worth asking’ based on prior study, that they would like to explore for a short time at the beginning of the next session.
- Involve students in the development of curricula standards and assessment criteria through provision of ongoing feedback throughout the course.

“The content of feedback is most effective when it is comprehensive, specific, descriptive and focussed.”

(Gibbs & Simpson, 2004/05; Rucker & Thomson, 2003)
• Use peer feedback to engage students in discussion.
• Use self-assessment to allow students to reflect on their own learning: Refer to ‘Facilitate the development of self-assessment’ below.

Encourage teacher/student dialogue around learning and feedback:
• Encourage class discussion around challenges of learning activities and assessment that students may be experiencing.
• Report feedback in class and structure break-out discussions of feedback or use classroom technologies to collate student responses in class and then feed back visually as a histogram.
• Review feedback in tutorials where students are asked to read the feedback comments they have been given and discuss these with peers.
• Ask students to find one or two examples of feedback comments that they found useful and explain how these helped.

Facilitate the development of self-assessment:
Examples of reflection and/or self-assessment include:
• Requesting the kinds of feedback they would like when they hand in work;
• Identifying the strengths and weaknesses in their own work in relation to criteria or standards before handing in for teacher feedback;
• Reflecting on their achievements and selecting work in order to compile a portfolio;
• Setting achievement milestones for a task and reflecting back on progress and forward to the next stage of action;
• Giving feedback on each other’s work (peer feedback).

Provide timely ‘fit to purpose’ feedback

Ensure you are familiar with RMIT’s University-wide assessment policy. [www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=qwxbqbg739r1](http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=qwxbqbg739r1)

Check within your respective College for specific direction on guidelines for assessment.

Diagnostic assessment:
• Diagnostic assessment identifies the level of competency/ performance/ knowledge before commencing learning in a course/ program/ learning experience but does not contribute to the student’s final grade. Diagnostic assessments include discussions and interviews, assessment tools (literacy, language and numeracy skills), short test-feedback cycles, quizzes, free writing tasks or observation.

Formative assessment:
Formative assessment provides feedback to the student during the learning experience. Examples of formative assessment tasks include reflection journals, question and answer sessions, in-class observations and presentations.

Early assessment is one aspect of formative assessment. It lets educators know early on, in the first few weeks of the semester, whether students are on track.

• Provide an assessment opportunity in the first three weeks to ascertain whether students are on track.
• Provide opportunities for informal early assessment e.g. one-minute papers where students carry out a small assessment task and hand this in anonymously at the end of a class i.e. What was the main point of this session? What question remains outstanding for you at the end of this session?
Strategies to Develop a Feedback Rich Environment

A Diversity of Learners

INCLUSIVE TEACHING AT RMIT

• Provide opportunities for students to submit draft assignments for feedback before the final submission.

On-going formative assessment:
• Give immediate feedback during instruction ie lecture, tutorial, laboratory e.g. a question to answer, a problem to solve, a case study to analyse, a skill to practice or an online quiz (self-assessment).

Summative assessment:
Summative assessment is focussed on the outcomes of the learning experience and concerned with evaluation of the final outcomes of a learning experience. Examples of summative assessments include examinations, projects (project phases submitted at various completion points could be formatively assessed), portfolios (could also be developed during development) and performances.

Feedback in summative assessment is delayed: it is usually provided after completion of a major task and is often in a written form. Refer to ‘Provide high quality, constructive feedback’ below.

Ensure feedback can be understood by all students:
• Develop a set of standardised feedback comments you can use.
• Use plain, unambiguous English i.e. avoid unnecessary colloquialisms and acronyms.
• Ensure feedback is free of culturally or gender biased examples.
• If handwritten, ensure that comments are easy to read.

Ensure feedback is accessible to all students:
• Offer flexibility in the provision of feedback: Offer feedback in a variety of forms e.g. written feedback on assignments, rubrics, online discussion postings, in-class questions and answers, face to face consultation.
• Post general feedback online to assist students with hearing, sight impairment or sensory disabilities or students who may not feel comfortable asking questions in class. Contact the Disability Liaison Unit to discuss appropriate strategies.
• Use Personal Response Systems (PRS) including dedicated handheld units (clickers) and/or internet connected mobile devices (Smartphone etc.) in large classes to find out what students know and get feedback. www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/technology/prs
• Use BlackBoard) to communicate with students i.e. set up a FAQ page, wiki/discussion page.

Ensure feedback encourages positive motivation and self-esteem:
• Praise effort and strategic behaviours rather than ability or intelligence.
• Provide ample low-stake tasks to provide feedback on progress and achievement rather than high stakes summative tasks where information is about success or failure or comparison.

Provide high quality, constructive feedback

Ensure feedback is constructive:
• Make sure that feedback is provided in relation to pre-defined criteria.
• Avoid giving too much feedback i.e. provide 3 specific feedback comments per assessment on how students can improve.
• Write comments in a non-authoritative tone and offer advice about the writing or presentation process as well as the content.

Ensure feedback can be understood by all students:
• Develop a set of standardised feedback comments you can use.
• Use plain, unambiguous English i.e. avoid unnecessary colloquialisms and acronyms.
• Ensure feedback is free of culturally or gender biased examples.
• If handwritten, ensure that comments are easy to read.

Ensure feedback is accessible to all students:
• Offer flexibility in the provision of feedback: Offer feedback in a variety of forms e.g. written feedback on assignments, rubrics, online discussion postings, in-class questions and answers, face to face consultation.
• Post general feedback online to assist students with hearing, sight impairment or sensory disabilities or students who may not feel comfortable asking questions in class. Contact the Disability Liaison Unit to discuss appropriate strategies.
• Use Personal Response Systems (PRS) including dedicated handheld units (clickers) and/or internet connected mobile devices (Smartphone etc.) in large classes to find out what students know and get feedback. www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/technology/prs
• Use BlackBoard) to communicate with students i.e. set up a FAQ page, wiki/discussion page.

Ensure feedback encourages positive motivation and self-esteem:
• Praise effort and strategic behaviours rather than ability or intelligence.
• Provide ample low-stake tasks to provide feedback on progress and achievement rather than high stakes summative tasks where information is about success or failure or comparison.
• Allocate time for students to re-write selected pieces of work.
• Provide grades on written work after students have responded to feedback comments (this will allow students to focus on the feedback rather than the grade).
• Monitor student anxiety around the provision of feedback and if necessary refer students to Student Services or the Study and Learning Centre.

References: