

Feedback in Education

Dr. Kanika Shanker*

Abhay Kumar Ambati Ramalingaiah**

Abstract

Background: Feedback is recognized as an essential part of the education and emphasized for several decades, and still provision of feedback is underutilized.

Methods: Based on the available review of literature and the relevance of it in education, the author reviews the process of giving effective feedback to the learners. This review can be utilized as a framework for effective communication between the learner and the educators

Results: The review equips the educators to set up the right stage for giving effective feedback in a timely manner. It also ensures that the learners take it positively and handles it well in the most efficient way.

Conclusions: Feedback is an important element in the educational process. It works best when it is timely, interactive and specific.

Keywords: Effective teaching, Learner, Educator.

Introduction

Effective teaching not only involves imparting information and understanding to students by providing constructive tasks, environments, and learning. It also involves assessing and evaluating learner's understanding of this information, so that the next goal of learner's goal matches with the present understanding of the students. An ideal learning environment or experience occurs when both teachers and students seek to give feedback.

It is very important to understand the learner evolution over the generations. Starting from traditionalists, baby boomers, generation X and now millennials. In today's fast pace of learner and educator interaction, we understand that millennials have shorter attention span and heavy reliance on

phone, social media and technology. This change may limit learners' opportunities to receive information about their performance.

Definition

Feedback is conceptualized as information provided by an educator for example teacher, peer, book, parent, and self-experience towards individual's performance or understanding. A teacher or parent can provide information, a peer can provide feedback. Peer review requires lot of training of the students so that peer review is of high standards without unnecessary judgement and it is helpful.

A book can provide information to clarify ideas, a parent can provide encouragement, and a learner can

*Pediatric Endocrinologist, Summit Endocrinology, Summit Physician Services, Summit Health, Clerkship Director for Medical Education at Summit Health, Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Penn State College of Medicine

**Senior Vice President, Technology Services, Logical Buildings, Livingston, New Jersey, The United States of America

look up the answer to evaluate the correctness of a response. Feedback thus is a "consequence" of performance and reinforces positive behaviors (Hattie J, Timperley H., 2007).

Learners can gain awareness of their strengths and areas needing improvement through active feedback. Therefore, feedback can go a long way in decreasing the gap between their current performance and desired performance. Feedback may come at different times and in different format (long and short). It can be verbal and or as a documented report. Usually the verbal feedback works better to increase the performance for achieving a short-term goal by the learners (Mann, Karen, et al., 2011).

The main difference between feedback and evaluation is that the evaluation is a judgment, often compared to others, which does not inherently improve performance. Feedback is diagnostic information used to know what and how to improve.

Types of Feedback

Micro feedback-giving feedback in every step of the process. Feedback is more effective when delivered after a task when the learner can give it their full attention, rather than in the moment when their mind is occupied.

Formative-This is timely, specific feedback intended to help the learner adjust and improve during a curriculum, workshop, program, or rotation.

Summative-This is provided at the end of a curriculum, workshop, program, or rotation, comparing the learner's performance to other learners or a standard.

While getting feedback, learners are actively making credibility judgements about the feedback and its source. Few learners have intentionally explored such judgements to gain a deeper understanding of how the process works. Secondly these judgements might interact to influence engagement with and interpretation of feedback. Therefore, it is very important that appropriate stage and environment should be created while providing feedback. Telio

and colleagues extend the empirically validated concept of a "therapeutic alliance" to propose the "educational alliance" as a framework for enhancing feedback in medical education (Weinstein DF., 2015). They highlight the importance of source credibility, which depends on the teacher-learner relationship and alignment of values, the teacher's understanding of the learner's role and goals, the teacher's direct observation of the learner, and the learner's perception of the teacher's good intentions (Rudland, Joy, et al., 2015).

The educational alliance is a model for providing effective feedback as it places the student in the center of the feedback process depend on learner's responsiveness, receptiveness and reflection, whilst acknowledging the important role the educator has in the quality of feedback. The educational alliance framework prompt educators to reconsider feedback and explore opportunities for optimizing it (Weinstein DF., 2015).

The various components of the effective feedback as per Eva KW, Regehr G. (2008) are:

- 1) **Set the stage:** Inform ahead of time so that the learner is prepared to take feedback.
- 2) **Self-assessment:** By the learner is the most important step in the feedback process. It is recognized as one of the hardest skills, as described by Benjamin Franklin in 1750. It represents the person's ability to self-assess for a task. Although, it may sound easy to do, the literature tells us that we are poor at this skill Dunning D, Heath C, Suls JM. (2004). The reasons that self-assessment can be difficult due to problems in information deficits and memory bias, unrealistic optimism, and inadequate feedback from others in the past Molloy E, Boud D (2013). Improving self-assessment can identify weaknesses and improve acceptance of feedback, leading to positive changes in behavior and performance whereas lack of self-assessment can lead to misconception of feedback as a negative act, and negative reaction that may prevent a productive response.

- 3) **Action plan:** The action plan for adult learners after the feedback is given are best initiated by learners for performance improvement. It is conceptualized that it will have stronger impact on the learner Gonzalo et al. (2014).
- 4) **Timely-**Situations do matter, feedback is dependent on the actual situation, and sometimes immediate feedback is necessary. While in some situations where emotions are involved waiting for the right moment is necessary.
- 5) **Encourage** ongoing learning and dialogue between the educator and the learner.

Conclusion

Rigorous research is needed to gain a better understanding of students' expectations of feedback. Strategies need to be adopted to meet students' expectations and educate students to take an active role and reflect on the feedback received.

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