

Feedback literate students achieve high grades

Without understanding how feedback operates, it is difficult for students to appreciate but connecting it to high grades could attract them, says David Carless

May 12, 2018 f in ⊠ By David Carless

Universities are under increasing pressure to satisfy students, but feedback has, for some years, been the aspect of the student learning experience which attracts the lowest approval ratings.

The feedback dilemma is that feedback is one of the most effective ways of stimulating improvement but at the same time it is tricky to carry out effectively. Feedback can be hard for students to interpret and it can be difficult for them to act upon. The way university courses and teaching are organised do not facilitate the kind of continuity and relationships in which feedback can thrive.



Plans to link staff seniority to teaching quality in TEF 'absurd'

READ MORE >

Feedback is quite a slippery term. What exactly does it mean? By feedback, I don't just mean comments from teachers to students, but also processes through which students make sense of information from peers or teachers and use them to enhance their work.

This focus on student use of feedback signals imperatives for new ways of thinking about feedback, qualitative changes in the kinds of strategies

Without understandings of how feedback operates and its potential value, it is difficult for students to appreciate and use feedback. In a recent open access article in the journal Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, David Boud and I refer to these understandings as "student feedback

Student feedback literacy denotes the understandings, capacities and dispositions needed to use comments for enhancement purposes. Four inter-related features represent the essence of students' feedback literacy: appreciating feedback, making judgments, managing emotions and taking action.

Students need to appreciate feedback processes and see their value. Students need sustained practice in making sound academic judgements about their own work and that of others. Students need to avoid knee-jerk reactions to critical feedback and appreciate it as a tool for improvement. And students need to take action to improve. Unless comments are taken up, there is minimal value in feedback.

The development of student feedback literacy places development firmly in students' hands. After all, it is only the student who can learn. It is unrealistic to expect teachers to provide more and more comments to large numbers of learners.

The teacher's role is mainly to design the curriculum in ways in which feedback can be used. Students develop their feedback literacy through activities embedded across programmes and at progressively

Enabling activities to support the development of feedback literacy mainly involve students in making academic judgments. The ability to judge the work of oneself and that of others is a crucial skill both for academic success, for the workplace and for lifelong learning.

Peer feedback is a valuable way of enabling students to practice the making of academic judgments but its potential is often underexploited. There is a need to convince students of the value of peer feedback. Receiving and acting on comments from peers or associates is a core element of academia

Students need training and coaching in how to provide comments to their peers. Without this kind of support, learners may not be clear about the benefits of the activity, and so may fail to involve themselves fully.



University Secretary UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER

Lecturer in Education (ITE Primary)

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF

UWS

Senior Lecturer in Heritage UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER



CHIEF-PD Trial Manager UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL



Domestic Assistant/Cleaner DURHAM UNIVERSITY



See all jobs





Search Jobs

SPONSORED



Work Opportunities

Work opportunities at the University of Helsinki

The University of Helsinki is an international academic community comprising 40,000 students and staff. We operate on.

Promoted by University of Helsinki

MOST VIEWED



Best universities in Europe September 14, 2017

Best universities in the UK



Best universities in the **United States**



Best universities in Australia



Best universities in Canada September 5 2017

MOST COMMENTED



Do teaching qualifications contribute to teaching quality?

Staff qualifications deserve greater weighting in the overall assessment of teaching



PI Thum's treatment will

Search our database of more than 3,000 global university jobs

The great value of peer feedback is not just in receiving comments. When analysing the work of others, we become more sensitive to the strengths and weaknesses of our own writing

Feedback literacy is not a natural skill for learners to acquire because it involves the development of complex capacities. These include challenges, such as facing up to ones weaknesses and summoning the willpower to strive for continuous improvement.

Increasingly common discourses of students as consumers may reinforce instrumental attitudes to learning and inhibit students from taking responsibility for developing their own knowledge and skills. This may lead to passive student reactions to feedback and perceptions that it is the teacher's role to tell students what to do to achieve high grades.

Facing up to this challenge might be a way forward. Students with well-developed feedback literacy achieve high grades. This could be a carrot to attract students.

If they want to achieve high grades, students need to understand expectations, learn how to selfevaluate their work during its production and become active seekers of feedback. These are the attributes of both feedback literate and high-achieving students.

Teachers are catalysts for the development of student feedback literacy when they organise curriculum and assessment in ways which provide students with multiple opportunities for generating and using feedback. The most important thing is an active student role in feedback.

David Carless is a professor of education at the University of Hong Kong.

RELATED ARTICLES



Plans to link staff seniority to teaching quality in TEF 'absurd' March 14, 2018



Schools 'over-predict grades to get students unconditional offer' January 3, 2018



Students with consumer mindset 'get lower grades' February 16, 2016



Do teaching qualifications contribute to teaching quality? $\ensuremath{\underline{\square}}$ April 27, 2018

HAVE YOUR SAY

Comment *

Please make sure that your comment does not contravene our terms and conditions Update your username to use in public-facing parts of the site, such as commenting on articles here.

Submit comment



dampen Singaporean...

Politicians' disparagement of historian's research signals that alternative interpretations of the



Language requirements for international students are too low A

Overseas students' academic potential is hobbled if their English does not far exceed



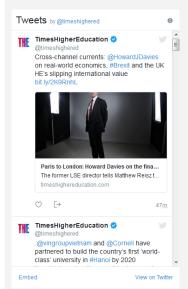
Should we be worried that women outnumber men on

There are now more women than men in higher education worldwide. While it would



Millions in public funding awarded to UK PhD applicants... 🗎

Staff strike prompts decision to award ESRC studentships to Cardiff University candidates





Forging links to aid global collaboration

On the day the 2018 World University Rankings were announced, notable figures in higher education met to discuss the way forward for international research partnerships

Promoted by Jisc

Contact Us About Us Write for the THE Terms & Conditions Privacy Cookie Policy

English | Simplified Chinese (简体中文) | France (Français)

Subscribe

If you like what you're reading online, why not take advantage of our subscription and get unlimited access to all of

You'll get full access to our website, print and digital editions, and the Times Higher Education app for iOS, Android and

Subscribe

