Practice example

Meet Your Marker: Encouraging Feedback Use through Conversation

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Abstract

Feedback is information provided to address the gap between students’ actual performance and assessment standards (Ramaprasad, 1983). At present, feedback is commonly transmitted to students through written comments (Yorke, 2011). This is incongruent with the notion of interactive, dialogic teaching that promotes better student outcomes (Trigwell, Prosser & Waterhouse, 1999). Although students value feedback, they report a lack of guidance on how to use feedback and make it meaningful (Weaver, 2006). This project built on work by Nash, et al., (2013) and provided students opportunities to discuss written feedback on a formative assessment task with their marker. Twenty five students enrolled in a third year unit of study had 10-minute consultations with their marker either in-person or via Skype. Markers could direct students to academic support workshops and online modules relevant to addressing the assessment feedback. Students were surveyed on whether (and how) process has changed their views about the meaning of feedback and using feedback. Responses for students in both groups were consistent in that they valued the opportunity to ask questions about their feedback and reinforced their view that feedback is important. Markers reported greater awareness of areas that students needed further support. Findings suggest a potential for technology to facilitate meaningful conversations about feedback which, in turn, encourage student use of feedback for future learning. In 2014, we are trialling this method in a large first year subject. The evaluation strategy has been revised so that students complete pre- and post-surveys. Surveys now include a standardised scale of self-regulated learning and questions about students’ perceptions about the purpose of feedback. Interactivity will be encouraged through staff reflection on the purpose of feedback (from students’ and their perspective) and discussions about how these differences result in different approaches to viewing, receiving and using feedback.

References


Theme

Approaches to assessment that demonstrate how students can use feedback for future learning (theme 4)