Feedback for Learning
Closing the assessment loop

The Australian higher education sector is in need of a useful and useable approach for improving feedback for learning.
This 18-month study aimed to address the following four challenges:

1. What are the current assessment feedback practices in higher education?
2. Why are some forms of these practices successful?
3. How can we best design for effective feedback to promote learning?
4. How can the circumstances of successful feedback for learning be replicated?

PHASE ONE · PHASE TWO · PHASE THREE · PHASE FOUR

PHASE ONE
IDENTIFYING feedback practices and experiences

- Large-scale survey of students (n = 4514) and staff (n = 406)
- Focus groups with students (n = 28) and staff (n = 15)

KEY FINDINGS

Survey results were positive overall...

- Improvement is recognised as the purpose of feedback by the majority of staff and students
- Students overwhelmingly report that the feedback comments they receive at university are understandable, detailed, usable and personalised

...but there is still room for improvement

- Students desire feedback prior to submission, but may need to be supported or encouraged to seek it
- A concerning percentage of students report feeling discouraged by feedback comments
- Students obtain feedback from a wide range of informal sources, including family and friends. Institutions need to recognise possible impacts for learning outcomes and how to support students to effectively leverage these networks
- While exams at the conclusion of units are common, students rarely receive performance information beyond a grade

PHASE TWO
CASE STUDIES of when feedback works and why

SEVEN EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK DESIGN AND PRACTICE

1. **Developmental and diverse feedback**
   Helping first-year learners to transition into higher education
   - Key feature: iterative feedback

2. **Personalised feedback at scale**
   Moderating audio feedback in first-year psychology
   - Key feature: audio feedback moderation

3. **In-class feedback**
   A flipped teaching model in first-year physics
   - Key feature: flipped teaching

4. **Authentic feedback through social media**
   Feedback beyond the learning management system in second-year digital media
   - Key feature: authentic feedback

5. **Layers and loops**
   Scaffolding feedback opportunities in first-year biology
   - Key feature: automated feedback

6. **Multiple prompt strategies across contexts**
   Feedback in classroom, lab and professional practice
   - Key feature: multiple feedback strategies

7. **Investing in educators**
   Enhancing feedback practices through the development of strong tutoring teams
   - Key feature: educator development

PHASE THREE
FRAMEWORK for effective feedback

The framework comprises four sections: a definition; seven design challenges, twelve conditions for success, and forty strategies for enacting the conditions.

DEFINITION
Feedback is a process in which learners make sense of information about their performance and use it to enhance the quality of their work or learning strategies

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS
Feedback is successful when...

CAPACITY FOR FEEDBACK
1. Learners and educators understand and value feedback
2. Learners are active in the feedback process
3. Educators seek and use evidence to plan and judge effectiveness
4. Learners and educators have access to appropriate space and technology

DESIGNS FOR FEEDBACK
5. Information provided is usable and learners know how to use it
6. It is tailored to meet the different needs of learners
7. A variety of sources and modes are used as appropriate
8. Learning outcomes of multiple tasks are aligned

CULTURE FOR FEEDBACK
9. It is a valued and visible enterprise at all levels
10. There are processes in place to ensure consistency and quality
11. Learners and educators ensure continuity of vision and commitment
12. Educators have flexibility to deploy resources to best effect

PHASE FOUR
ENGAGEMENT with institutions and key stakeholders

NATIONAL ROADSHOW
- Workshops attended by 294 academic staff in six capital cities
- Roundtable discussions attended by 66 senior leaders from 6 universities
- Online webinar viewed over 330 times

IMPACT SURVEY
- 250 responses received from 95% of Australian universities
- Senior leaders from 83% of Australian universities responded to the survey
- Just over half of survey respondents had attended a national roadshow feedback workshop, webinar or roundtable

KEY FINDINGS
- Just over 90% of feedback session attendees had shared or planned to share information they learnt with colleagues
- Nearly 85% of attendees had changed or intend to change their feedback practice after attending a feedback session
- While senior leaders recognise the importance of the framework's conditions for success, they report that implementation is yet to reflect this perceived importance

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To view or download project resources, including case studies, the framework & workshop materials, visit feedbackforlearning.org

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