

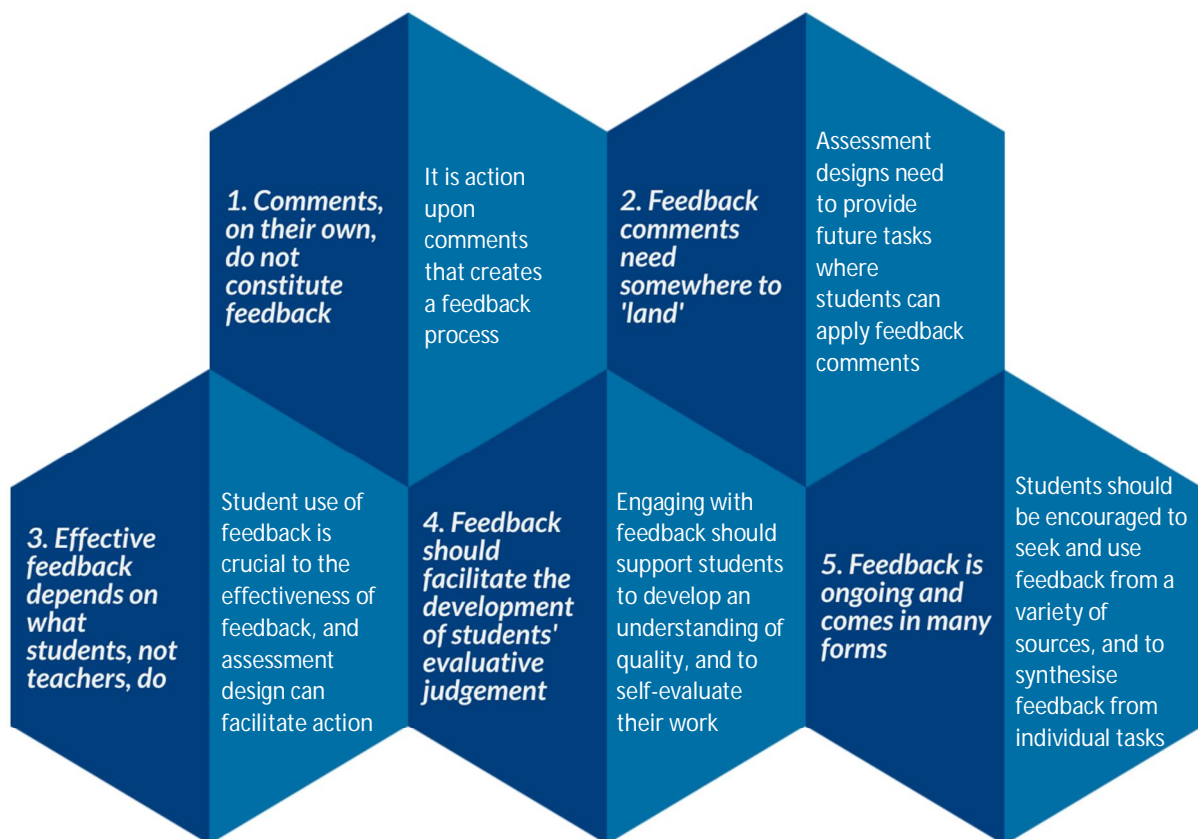


Learning-focused feedback

Many approaches to feedback in Higher Education adopt a transmission-focused approach, where the feedback process focuses on the provision of comments. This 'old paradigm' approach is problematic because a) too much emphasis is placed on what teachers, not students, do; and b) there is no guarantee that the comments will have any impact on student learning.

In contrast, a 'new paradigm' learning-focused approach to feedback places primary emphasis on what students *do* with feedback comments, rather than the comments themselves.

In a learning-focused approach to feedback, there are several important principles:



Framing feedback comments in a learning-focused approach:

What level has the student achieved?

- Use the assessment criteria as the lens through which to evaluate the work
- Search for evidence of achievement against criteria
- Highlight a rubric or grade descriptors to show where their work sits against each criterion

How can I help the student to understand their level of achievement against the criteria?

- Use descriptive language in comments, avoiding vague evaluative terms such as 'excellent', 'good', 'poor'.
- Explain why the student's work aligns with a particular level of performance
- Focus on developing students' capacity to evaluate their own work. For example, for grammar and referencing errors, correct once, and then invite students to correct errors in the rest of their work.

How can I direct the student towards future improvement?

- Focus on provision of targeted comments that identify priorities for improvement
- Focus on provision of actionable comments that direct students towards strategies, actions, or resources that students can use to improve

How can I personalise feedback?

- Focus on comments that relate specifically to the student's work, rather than generic statements that could relate to any assignment.
- Frame comments in ways that acknowledge students' effort and approach to the task
- Invite students to request feedback on specific elements of their work using interactive coversheets (see DHE Feedback Focus #1).

Further Resources

Winstone, N. E., & Carless, D. (2019). *Designing effective feedback processes in higher education: A learning-focused approach*. London: Routledge.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5zymogAaMM&feature=youtu.be>

http://newmediaresearch.educ.monash.edu.au/feedback/https://www.deakin.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1853886/03-cradle-feedback.pdf

<https://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/dlte/Documents/1%20Commenting%20Constructively%20Quick%20Guide.pdf>

<https://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/dlte/Documents/4%20Streamlining%20Feedback%20on%20Summative%20Tasks%20Quick%20Guide.pdf>