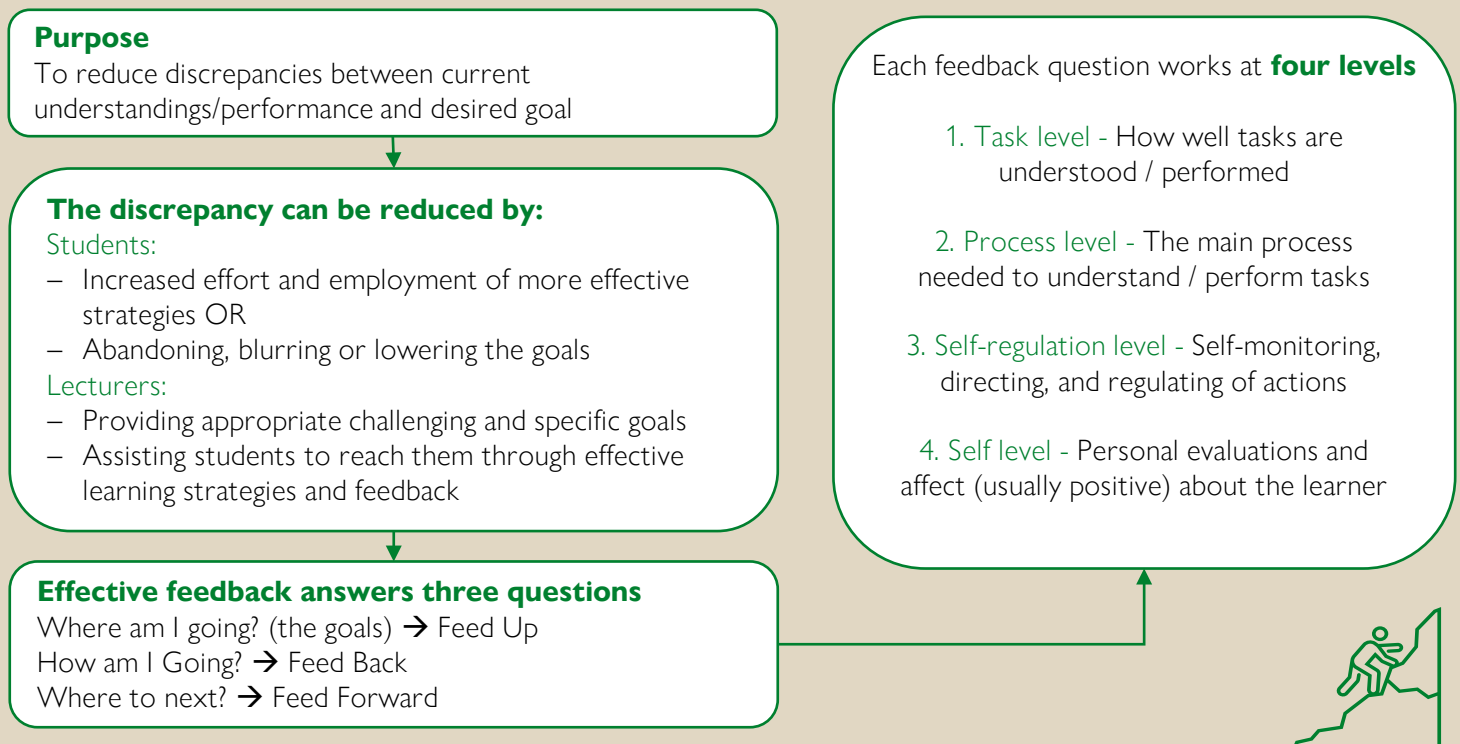


Feedback

Feedback on the level of performance and knowledge is an important factor in learning processes. Feedback can be given before (proactive), during (formative) or after (summative) a teaching session, with different objectives being pursued depending on the type of feedback. The following considerations can be applied to all types of feedback, but primarily relate to formative feedback that lecturers give to students or to which lecturers instruct their students (enabling them to provide peer feedback). The overriding aim of such feedback is to support students in achieving their learning objectives.

Dimensions of Feedback

According to Hattie & Timperley (2007), effective feedback should answer three key questions: "Where am I going?" (with reference to the learning objectives), "How do I proceed?" (possibly combined with assessment tasks) and "Where to next?".



Feedback can be provided at the level of the task, the learning/working process, self-regulation, and at the level of the person. Feedback at the task level helps to point out errors and identify areas in need of improvement. Feedback at the process and self-regulation level provides opportunities to show students ways to improve (e.g. use of effective learning strategies). Feedback at the self-level is the least effective as it is less specific about performance.

Principles for Giving and Receiving Feedback



Determining the goal and creating the framework conditions: It must be clear to everyone involved why feedback is being given or obtained. Sufficient time must be scheduled, and the place and atmosphere must be perceived as pleasant.



Appropriate wording: Positive feedback emphasises appreciation and a benevolent attitude. If negative feedback is flanked by positive feedback, it is easier to handle for both sides. However, positive feedback should not be used as an introductory phrase, as it is of little importance and takes away the conciseness of the following statements. Furthermore, feedback should be precise and focussed on the objective being pursued (general feedback is poorly suited to steering learning processes).



Professional communication at eye level: Feedback should be given at a professional level and not at a personal level. Communication with students must take place at eye level.



Including reactions: Based on the recipient's reactions to the feedback, clarification can be sought, and it should be considered how the feedback could possibly be formulated differently to avoid misunderstandings.



Awareness of possible errors in judgement: Feedback requires an opinion formed in advance. It is inevitable that errors in judgement will occur. Feedback providers must be aware of this in order to recognize and correct errors.

(Dainton, 2018, p. 52-54)

Common Hurdles to Feedback & Solutions



Oversaturation: The amount of required feedback – possibly combined with a low experienced increase in quality by giving or receiving it – reduces the motivation to participate in feedback (for all participants).



Before asking for feedback, the instructor should define what it is intended to achieve. If transparency is created and the value of feedback is made visible, people are more willing to give precise and meaningful feedback.

Lack of time: Feedback is time-consuming and has hardly any place next to the teaching of the course content.



The instructor must schedule assessment at the course planning stage as to where feedback is useful accordingly. Here, too, the general rule is: It is better to ask fewer questions and receive specific answers.

Negative feedback: Negative feedback is perceived as unpleasant and is therefore avoided or not accepted.



Feedback should always relate to the professional (factual) level. If feedback relates to the personal (relationship) level, there are often emotions involved and the necessary distance is lacking. It is therefore important to create transparency and recognise emotions at an early stage.

(Dainton, 2018, p. 23-32)

Exemplary Feedback Situations and Options

Below, exemplary feedback-related situations and possible instruments are outlined. The presented feedback instruments serve as inspiration for how feedback situations can be organized. The list is not conclusive, and the instruments can be used in different variations in a range of other situations.



Situation Project Support: Lecturers support students in working on a project and students receive regular feedback on their performance.

Counselling: Lecturers and students come together for a discussion. Lecturer decide in advance how long this will last (approx. 10-20 minutes per person/group) and what the key points of the discussion should be. The purpose of counselling is to show possible ways forward and not to make a direct assessment. It is also not about convincing someone of a certain opinion.

Learning diary: Throughout the module, students maintain a logbook. Between sessions, they can be tasked with reflecting on their entries and deriving insights. It is essential to clearly define the expectations for the scope, format, and submission of these reflections.

Process analysis: Lecturers can use questions such as "How was the process experienced so far?", "How goal-orientated was the work?", "What could the group improve?", "What do we want to agree with each other?" to uncover group processes and potential for improvement.

Round table: Various groups meet with the lecturer. Each group presents its interim status. Students and lecturers ask questions and give feedback. A round table expresses equality - the discussion should not be understood as an evaluation.



Situation Learning Assessment: At the middle of the semester, lecturers determine if students are on course to achieve the learning objectives.

Flashlight: The lecturer asks a clearly formulated question, and students answer (in turn / openly) for a short mood enquiry. Lecturers collect answers and summarise / discuss them at the end.

Interim evaluation: The following four questions are each written on a poster and hung up in the room: "Goals achieved?", "What went well?", "What didn't?" and "Suggestions for change?". The students circulate and write down their feedback on all questions.

Short test: The lecturer prepares a few questions – multiple choice or open text – on the subject matter. It is important that the test is discussed, mistakes and shortcomings are pointed out and, if necessary, material is repeated.



Situation Peer-Feedback: Lecturers intend to enable students to provide feedback to themselves.

Five finger feedbacks: Students are asked to give feedback using finger signs. The finger signs are as follows: (1) Thumb up: I thought this was great; (2) Index finger up: I have achieved these goals; (3) Middle finger up: I don't/didn't like this; (4) Ring finger up: This touched me emotionally; (5) Little finger up: This came up short for me.

Exchange of exam questions: Students are asked to formulate exam questions (individually / in groups), exchange them with each other and answer them. Unclear points can be discussed in plenary at the end.

Telephone survey: The students form a circle with an empty chair in the centre. The person who sits in the centre seeks feedback by conducting a telephone survey among the people in the circle. Individual students are "called" and asked for specific input. The aim is to obtain feedback independently by asking questions.

Means of Communication



Advantages of verbal feedback:

Direct response so that any unclarities can be addressed, and usually less time-consuming



Advantages of written feedback:

Precise formulation of questions and feedback, no risk of digression (and therefore distortion), as well as better assured anonymity



Ideally, the choice of the communication medium is determined by the goal set with the feedback, less by the time available.

(Dainton, 2018, p. 41-42)

Sources

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