

Learning and Teaching Conference 2012

Abstract 6B

Facilitating learning: supporting students' self-improvement through reflective use of feedback

Presenter: Julie Hulme, Higher Education Academy

Assessment and feedback is the experience with which students report least satisfaction in the National Student Survey. Academics are keen to find methods of delivering recognisably effective feedback; however, with funding cuts to the sector, improvements must necessarily be efficient and not overly burdensome to teaching staff. Hulme and Forshaw (2009) found that both students and tutors valued verbal feedback mechanisms, but that these were considered to be time consuming and inefficient. This study investigated a method of delivering verbal feedback efficiently using timetabled teaching time.

This study investigated the use of an alternative method of feedback return across three cohorts studying a biological psychology module (second undergraduate year). In year 1, students' marked coursework was returned at an interim point in the module, with structured written feedback on four transferable skills: literature searching, reading for understanding, academic writing and critical evaluation. In year 2, the same feedback sheets were employed, but students were guided (in seminar groups of 15-20 students) to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses with regard to each skill, and to identify benefits and strategies for improvement. In year 3, the same procedure was used, but an earlier additional formative assessment opportunity was provided. At the end of the module, feedback was evaluated and students were examined and marked on the same four skills.

Students consistently rated feedback as better than that received in other modules, and intended to continue to self-improve using feedback. Statistical analysis revealed that participating in guided reflection significantly improved students' performance in the subsequent examination, and also demonstrated the value of early formative assessment opportunities for overall student achievement. A model of good practice for feedback return is proposed, and exemplar resources will be shared with delegates.

References

Hulme, J.A. and Forshaw, M.J. (2009). Effectiveness of feedback provision for psychology undergraduate students. *Psychology Learning and Teaching*, 8, 1, 34-38.

Outcomes

Employ a new method of delivering feedback to students, which promotes student engagement with feedback and facilitates independent learning

