

Providing Effective Assessment Feedback with John Dwyer on 23rd March 2022

Nb. The following questions were not covered during the webinar. Please see the response below (in **blue**) from the presenter, **John Dwyer**.

Q1. Fazluz: Does this feedback depend on the Formative and Summative assessment?

→ Formative assessment requires timely feedback but Summative at the end of the assessment, isn't it?

John Dwyer:

You have this right. Formative feedback is provided at any time throughout the training or assessment processes. Formative feedback/assessment allows the learner to try out ideas in a relatively risk-free situation. Formative assessment outcomes are not used in making a judgement. Summative assessment and feedback occur at an endpoint. This is not always at the end of the course (as in a "Final" exam). For instance, if parts of an activity are assessed over a period of time then the assessments made at each stage are "summative" and contribute towards the final result.

Q2. Fazluz: Does this improvement strategy link to the performance evidence in a UOC?
(with reference to slide #19)

John Dwyer:

I have copied the content of Slide 19.

C: Feedback is clear and focuses on improvement strategies

Feedback needs to be regular and provided in a clear and focused way

Written comments need to be in language that is accessible to the learners and should refer back to the learning goals and success criteria

Feedback should provide specific guidance on how to improve learning outcomes by enabling the learner to think about the learning involved in the task, rather than just the activity of completing the task

Strategies for improvement could be focused on aspects of knowledge and/or performance. The actual focus will depend on what the trainer/assessor identifies as a problem for an individual learner or group of learners. The actions taken by the trainer/assessor need to be clear and focussed, using language that is easily understood by the learner(s). Note the final point that suggests that feedback should help the learner focus on the learning involved in the task, rather than just on the activity of completing the task,

Q3. Marcus: Do people actually do that? (with reference to slide #28)

John Dwyer:

I have copied the content of Slide 28.

High quality feedback increases motivation and self-esteem

Students pay more attention to feedback that consists mainly of comments focused on outcomes, without a judgement

- ❑ *Using only judgement indicators (ticks, crosses, S, NS) with few or no comments is demotivating to some students who interpret a low mark as meaning they don't have the capacity to learn this subject, so they tend to give up*
- ❑ *Praising effort and work/study behaviours, combined with feedback on progress towards learning outcomes, leads to higher achievement than praising attributes such as ability or intelligence.*
- ❑ *The former focuses on the learning process, whereas the latter focuses on the student.*

Marcus, I am not sure what you are asking? The main points of this slide were:

- (1) students are more interested in the content of the feedback than in the final judgement offered; ticks and crosses do not provide useful, meaningful input for many learners, and
- (2) praising effort and work behaviours combined with offering comment on progress made is more effective than providing feedback on the learner's personal attributes (Praise is more effective if it is focused on the activity rather than on the person).

Q4. Fazluz: Is there any specific ASQA guideline or feedback sample? What's is sufficient feedback in the ASQA's eyes?

John Dwyer

The short answer I, "No". The feedback provided by the trainer/assessor is "sufficient" to the extent that it meets the needs of the learner. Sometimes this might require providing in-depth information; sometimes it might require only one, timely word.

Q5. Fazluz: Does feedback need to provide on each assessment task and lastly overall feedback on the entire unit? Or ASQA prefer only 1 at the end?

John Dwyer:

The Standards require trainers/assessors to provide feedback, but they do not specify how much feedback or when such feedback should be given. In my experience, this question is often asked because many assessment instruments contain a space for feedback. Making an entry here could meet the learner's need for feedback, but in many cases adding comments here does not really support the learner. I think that RTOs include this section because they want to provide tangible evidence that they have given feedback. However, sometimes a quick verbal response or a quick diagram may provide better feedback than making an obligatory response in a space, just because the space is there.

Q6. Jo: What tips do you have for providing feedback in an online environment where the 'words' lack emotion and are often interpreted through the lens of how the learner is feeling at the time?

John Dwyer:

Face to face comments are still possible in online environments. In recent months we have all become aware of the power of technologies like Zoom and other interactive technologies. The challenge is to find time and ways to use these technologies as a vehicle for the provision of effective feedback

By the way, don't forget that "words spoken face-to-face can also lack emotion and are often interpreted through the lens of how the learner is feeling at the time."

Comment. Yasser: I think we need only detailed feedback when the answer is not satisfactory otherwise encouraging words for the satisfactory answer is preferred and recommended

John Dwyer:

In general, I am comfortable with this comment, but I remind you of the four kinds of constructive feedback that I discussed in Slide 14.

Four types of constructive feedback:

- *Negative feedback – corrective comments about past behaviour*
- *Positive feedback – affirming comments about past behaviour*
- *Negative feed-forward – corrective comments about future performance*
- *Positive feed-forward – affirming comments about future behaviour*