

## Chapter 13

# A Cross-Professional Collaborative Educational Approach to Building Student Feedback Literacy

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Understanding and engaging with assessment feedback is a crucial step in contributing to a student's development of academic skills and content knowledge. However, in order for feedback to be effective, students need to be aware of its importance and how to engage with it. Preliminary benchmarking of the tertiary education sector in Australia demonstrates that publicly and openly accessible student resources on feedback are not available. Rather, most student resources at universities focus on common academic and study skills. At the University of Southern Queensland, a student resource was developed to inform students on the value of feedback and how to engage with it through a three-step process. This resource was embedded in first-year courses as part of a suite of academic and study skills resources. This chapter explores how student feedback resources have the potential to positively contribute to student feedback literacy, learning and development.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Students' engagement with and understanding of feedback represents an important aspect of their learning journey at a tertiary institution. However, it has been suggested that the usefulness of feedback is limited by factors such as students' lack of engagement with feedback (Hounsell, 1987; Orsmond, Merry & Callaghan, 2004; Price, Handley, Millar, & O'Donovan, 2010) or not understanding how to interpret or utilize it (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004; Lea & Street, 1998; McCune, 2004; Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2002; Price, Handley, Millar & O'Donovan, 2010). This highlights the need for academic staff to utilize educational strategies that will teach students the value and importance of feedback, and how to engage with it effectively. This chapter explores a cross-professional collaborative educational approach employed at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) and reasons for the development of a student resource that focused exclusively on feedback. Effective embedding and teaching strategies that target the wider student cohort will also be discussed. In addition, this chapter will examine the potential impact of this approach to educating students about feedback, building capacity and implications for teaching practices at tertiary institutions in terms of student learning and development.

## **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH FEEDBACK IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT**

This section explores the importance of student engagement and how a lack of engagement can diminish the effectiveness of feedback. Factors that impact or constrain engagement, from the perspective of students and teaching staff are discussed. The aim of this section is to provide the higher education context and understanding of feedback engagement, or lack thereof, thus raising important points for consideration.

The importance of feedback to student learning and development has been widely acknowledged within the literature (Carless, Salter, Yang, & Lam, 2011; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hounsell, 2003), and has drawn much attention regarding its functionality, and its importance in contributing to the effectiveness of learning and teaching practices (Ackerman & Gross, 2010; Carless et al. 2011; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hounsell, 2003; Mulliner & Tucker, 2017). However, feedback is not as effective when students do not understand, engage and utilize it, and are instead only interested in their results (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004; Price et al. 2010; Mulliner & Tucker, 2017). Essentially, students have the choice on whether to engage with any feedback they receive (Price et al. 2010). The reasons for why students do or fail to act on feedback could be a result of reasoned objection to it following extensive consideration, or not trusting the feedback provider (Price et al. 2010). Negative feedback, while meant to be constructive, can lead to a negative reaction from students as it is critiquing their performance and potentially their individual self (Ackerman & Gross, 2010). It could also be due to when feedback is provided and if it can be applied (Crisp, 2007; Price et al. 2010) or students might be receiving inconsistent feedback from teaching staff in different courses (Crisp, 2007). Consequently, lack of engagement could result in students committing the same mistakes in subsequent assignments, which can be frustrating for markers who had spent considerable amount of time and energy in providing the initial feedback (Crisp, 2007).

In attempting to understand the reasons why students may not engage with their assessment feedback, it is important to explore the perceptions about feedback between students and academics. In a study focusing on student engagement with assessment feedback, Price et al. (2010), note that the application

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